LAWRENCE STRUILBY
OR
TWENTYFIVE YEARS OF
BUSH-LIFE
IN
AUSTRALIA.

No.

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BUSH-LIFE IN AUSTRALIA.

LAWRENCE STRUILBY;

OR,

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

DURING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

OF

BUSH-LIFE IN AUSTRALIA.

EDITED BY THE

REV. JOHN GRAHAM.

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PREFACE.

THE editor's design in publishing this book is to illustrate the formation of character in new and strange scenes; and, if he has not failed in handling the materials, it will set, in a strong light, before its readers the fundamental life-lesson that, "honesty is the best policy" everywhere. The Christian will trace in it the hand of Him, without whom "a sparrow cannot fall to the ground." And yet it is not intended to be a preaching book on any of these subjects; but the true and simple narrative of an emigrant from Ulster to Australia.

Lawrence Struilby was by no means a model of precocious wisdom, or of all the juvenile proprieties, when in the family cabinet council it was resolved that he should emigrate to Australia under the auspices of, and in company with, the grave and shrewd Jerrold Lock. Some are yet alive who peeped in at the gathering of uncles, aunts, and parents, who resolved on his "going abroad to pitch his fortune."

Some time before, the agent of the N— estate, who was a blustering militia captain, had cudgelled a distant and feeble relative of the Struilbys for going to market

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by a private road, where the public had long been allowed right of way. This agent was a great enemy to unlicensed netting of salmon on the river, which the tenantry thought their own, so far as it flowed through their lands. He had, on one dark night, come on a company of young men noisily—but only in pretence—preparing to fish, and, running into an old net on the bank purposely spread for *him*, a strong arm caught him and slung him into the river, while the game-keeper ran for his life, although the captain cried—we omit oaths—"Halloo, Springtrap, shoot them, shoot them!" He was an expert swimmer, and after his involuntary immersion he scrambled up the bank and fled. On the next parade-day of the yeomanry, the captain looked thunder and lightning in Larry's face, as he inspected him in the ranks. He suspected, but others *knew* that it was the young yeoman's brawny arm had given the cold bath to the cowardly cudgeller of poor Steward Struilby. Vengeance was seething in high places for Larry. Besides, he had gone even beyond the anti-game morality of his neighbourhood, which taught that a "salmon spawned in the river and fattened in the ocean, a bird of the air, or a hare that feeds at large, is only the property of the Creator; and catch them who can." His musket had levelled antlered game that made lairs in his father's corn, or being at large, might have done so. All these, and many more such facts, came out freely at the grave and confidential tea-party that re-

sulted in the decision for his emigration. Uncle Jemmy, who opened his mind in dark sayings, affirmed that, "a small farm in Ireland would never give root-room to such a plant; that the spirit of Nimrod was in him; that he should be sent where he would have license from nature to hunt; and that voluntary was better than compulsory emigration." Even his mother consented; for she feared he was getting into card-playing, ungodly company, and had too much leisure to frequent it.

This, then, is the young man whose progress we shall trace in this biography. And such are thousands in Ulster and elsewhere still. He was not perfected for the voyage of life before launching; but he weathered all storms, and brought back a noble freight; and we shall try to show HOW. The narrative will show his progress, from the condition of a hand of all-work, to that of an overseer, and then to that of a wealthy stockowner. We shall trace the discipline through which the young man of strong passions learnt to curb them; how the young man of good sense and powerful muscles turned them to good account; how he got loose principles and powers compacted by self-knowledge, experience, wisdom, and trust in God.

He was naturally observant; and will tell us what he saw at the antipodes, in the forest and on the gold fields. He was very fond of nature in all her forms, and will be sure to notice striking aspects of vege-

tation, scenery, and animal life, where most of us can never see them. He was thrown into an Australian prison, and will draw prison portraits and show us the recklessness and downwardness of men who have sold themselves to evil; and yet the germs that may, withal, be budding in such unpromising soil. He does not gather plants into gardens, or animals into menageries by separate chapters of description, they run as freely through his narrative as they did through their native haunts. For nearly twenty years he lived on the *farthest* outpost of Australian semi-civilization; indeed, for that period and more, he lived among the aboriginal savages. His life was often endangered and sometimes saved by them; for weeks his wife lived alone among them, while he was on journeys. He hunted, tailed cattle, tracked, travelled, in fact lived with them, more than perhaps any other white man ever did in the colony, except the escaped convict Buckley, whom a tribe adopted as their chief. He will speak much, therefore, of them, and give life-pictures of their lives and manners. His feelings to the friendly tribes around him were most kindly, and they never betrayed his trust. He highly admired their wonderful skill in the arts peculiar to their own narrow existence, and lamented the gradual process of aboriginal extinction. From Mrs. Struilby's account of the native boy they adopted, as well as from the success of the native schools

at Poonindie, Ebenezer, and elsewhere, it is quite clear the Australian aborigines are not incapable of civilization, that they *need* not cease as a variety of our species, and that their labour might be yet most useful in tropical Australia.

His wife, too, will help by sketches from her graphic pen. He embarked on more than one private exploring expedition; he drove cattle and provisions for hundreds of miles to the diggings, by ways so daring that a government officer arrested him as a madman for endangering the life of himself and his men; and yet in crossing brimming, bridgeless rivers, he never lost the life of a man, scarcely of a bullock; and before he left the colony he might have been a magistrate, and have had a salary of £1,500 a year as superintendent of a proposed inland route of traffic.

In fact, the editor finds such a mass of strange yet true material from which to compose a volume or volumes, that it has consumed some of his holiday weeks in several successive seasons, and yet much remains to be set in order for publication.

He begs the reader to remember that in this volume he will not find himself perusing a tale, a novel, a romance, or any form of fiction; but sketches of the real life of a real man toiling, struggling, and succeeding in the world; where, under different forms, we all may attain the highest success, and fulfil the noblest ends of our being.

Lawrence Struilby in passing through the scenes—some of which we shall sketch, most of which he has sketched himself—never dreamt that act or epistle of his should ever appear in print; he lived his own life, and sought to do his own work without reference to any eye but that of conscience and God. Most remarkably have the materials of his autobiography come into our hand; and if this sample of them afford instruction, entertainment, or profit to others, our labours shall not be unrewarded, as his life has not in any case been in vain.

Perhaps this volume may fall into the hands of parents, and we trust it may help to show them the value of wise and pure home influences. It will fall into the hands of some young men, and may it teach them that cunning is not wisdom; that *honest work* is the only stable basis of prosperity; that the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; that kindness of heart will ever be its own reward. It may fall into the hand of some youth about to leave an over-crowded population in the old country, for unoccupied colonial fields; may it teach him to keep a brave heart amid heavy discouragements, and not to despair while he has a hand to work and Providence to trust!

JOHN GRAHAM.

London, 1863.

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INTRODUCTION.

When, on a March morning of A.D. 1606, the Dutch yacht Duyfen discovered the northern coast of the great Southern continent, a discovery was made next in importance to that of the New World by Columbus. But the secret of its value was hidden from its discoverers, who were not destined to colonise their New Holland. Europeans were so busy for ages fighting about acres of boundary that they had no time or care to explore a new continent. To give the Dutch, however, their due, New Holland and its islands owe more to them for being brought to light than to any other people. Look over the names still marked on the map, especially on the western and northern coasts, and Lewin Land, Endracht Land (Lioness and Concord Lands, from the names of the exploring ships), De Witt Land, Tasman Land, &c., will testify our obligations to Dutch ability and enterprise. In 1628, Commodore De Witt and General Peter Carpenter explored the land and gulf that bear their names. Abel Jansen Tasman, in 1642, discovered that island, which he thought part of the continent, and in honour of Anthony Van Diemen, Governor General of India, called it Van

Diemen's Land. It was reserved, however, for Captain—then Lieutenant—Cook to discover the eastern coast of Australia, from Cape Howe to Cape York, in 1770. His ship, the Endeavour, gave her name to the straits which separate Prince of Wales' Island from the extreme northern point of the world's fifth continent. Thus was thrown open to us a new world of land extending in its greatest width 2,400 miles from east to west, from Harvey Bay to Shark Bay along the 25th parallel of south latitude; and having an average breadth of 1,400 miles; while, between extreme points north and south, it is 1,700 miles long, and on an average probably 1,200 or more. When we study the extent, capabilities, and probable future of this land, we are like men who dream, and ask ourselves is that vast Austral continent really the property of this little British island; is it ours for colonization, government and commerce, and that without battle or purchase? The discovery of a new planet or system is interesting to astronomers on speculative grounds; but the discovery of Australia touched all the practical interests of Britain and the world. Oceans of ether cannot carry us to the stars; but the high-way of waters takes us safely in some sixty days to this new world. To whom is Australia not interesting? It interests the geographer, for its 2,690,810 square miles—more than two-thirds the superficial extent of

Europe—stretch through every shade of temperate and tropical climate, inviting exploration and containing rich treasures for either squatters or *savans*. In its explorations are found some of the noblest chapters of human daring and endurance; and much, very much, remains yet to be done. Australia is indeed a new world to the naturalist. There he is introduced to a new—though, strictly speaking, the *oldest* unfossilized—animal economy. Its mammalia are not so rich as rare; yet out of the earth's 1,697 species of beasts it has 150 and 600 of birds. Its reptiles and insects, as the colonists know, are a powerful phalanx; and its flora, while richer than its fauna, is almost unique. Its ornithorhynchus is a living paradox, a disjunctive conjunction between birds, beasts, reptiles and fishes, whose characteristics it presents distinct yet combined. Its 105 species of pouch-bearing or marsupiate animals are in their economy as antipodal as in their location. Australia is a land of growing interest to the politician; for there under the sceptre of British rule the questions of universal suffrage and union of Church and State are solving themselves. It is a land of interest to the political economist; for not only do its vast tracts invite, and its gold mines draw, our surplus population, but its varied soil and climate will yield the products of every land. Its figs can compete with those of Turkey, its vineyards with those of the

Rhine, and its tobacco with that of Virginia; and its cotton, were it not for scarcity of labour and distance of transit, would beat slave-grown material out of Lancashire markets. In this latter article its present disadvantages must long cause it to lag behind India. But when its colonies have spread from the circumference to the centre of the continent, no doubt it will have its own cotton markets and factories for itself and surrounding islands.

Its gold mines stand unrivalled in richness and extent. The modern Ophir is not only more ascertainable, but more auriferous and almost as famous as the ancient. Its flocks and herds, too, outrival those of eastern patriarchs as far in number as the squatter's cattle-runs do those of Job or Abraham in extent. Some of these runs are as large as the whole of Palestine. How wonderful that the discovery of Australia should have been reserved for a period so far in the world's history, and the possession of it given to the only nation capable of planting it with free men and free institutions—given to the colonising race of Britain! And while exploration, adventure, commerce and population have been making such rapid strides there, is it not wonderful that the masses of our people know so little of Australia and Australians? So at least the colonists think. Let us hear them speak of themselves. The *Melbourne Argus* says :—

"It is not only necessary to assert the existence and define the whereabouts of Victoria, for the information of the mother country, but to do so pertinaciously. If the *Times* newspaper is so ill-informed with respect to the geographical divisions of Australia as to suppose that this colony and Port Philip are two distinct settlements, and if the prelate who was so recently appointed to a see in Queensland knew so little of the scene of his future labours as to believe that it possessed a coolie population, and that Brisbane was only a few days' journey from Perth, the amount of popular ignorance which prevails in England with respect to these colonies must be something enormous, and requires immediate correction. This should be done out of regard both to our own interests and to those of the swarms of people annually thrown off from the parent hive, and who need directing where to find 'fresh fields and pastures new.' It is not from any wounded feeling of self-love that this colony complains of the ignorance which prevails, and the misrepresentations which are current respecting it in Great Britain. A country which absorbs nearly one-sixth of the exports of the parent state, and which, in ten years, has sent her a hundred millions sterling in gold, and pastoral produce of the value of sixteen millions sterling, could afford to be overlooked or misunderstood without any sacrifice of its self-respect; but inasmuch as the progress of Victoria depends quite as much upon the continuous increase of its population from without, as upon the development of its internal resources, it becomes a matter of vital importance to dissipate the ignorance and rectify the erroneous impressions which obtain in the mother country with regard to ourselves.

"Something more is required than to assure the uneasy classes in Great Britain that Victoria is not a tract of arid country, destitute of rivers, and periodically denuded of its

scanty vegetation by bush fires; that its metropolis is not Canvas Town, and that its population are not lawless nomades, who dissipate their easy gains in champagne, and settle their quarrels by an appeal to firearms. It is not enough to disabuse the public mind in England; we must do our best to enlighten and instruct it. Of the millions who are wearing out their lives and consuming their energies in an incessant struggle for the bare means of a miserable subsistence in the mother country, how many are there who could point out upon a map the situation of this colony; how many are acquainted with the fact, that its area equals that of England, Scotland, and Wales united; that, in its most thickly inhabited districts, the number of persons to the square mile is only one-fifth of the density of population in Scotland; that the climate is superior to that of Nice and Lisbon, and the soil so fertile as to produce two crops a year of esculents which can only be raised once a year in England; that only one-fiftieth part of our auriferous soil has yet been mined upon, and that every acre of ground hitherto worked has yielded one thousand pounds' worth of gold; that our flocks comprise nearly six million sheep, and our herds nearly seven hundred thousand head of cattle; that we have half-a-million acres of land under cultivation, a thousand miles of road partially or wholly made, and four hundred bridges constructed; that we have fifteen hundred miles of telegraphic wire in operation, and that six million letters annually pass through our inland post offices; that we consume £15,000,000 worth of imports and raise a revenue of £3,000,000; that our banks contain £7,000,000 of deposits, while our savings' banks hold half-a-million sterling on behalf of eleven thousand depositors; that we annually expend £120,000 on the educational institutions of the colony, and that it appears from the report of the registrar-general, that 'the adult population of

Victoria possesses a higher degree of instruction than is enjoyed by the majority of the people of Great Britain?'

"It is with facts like these that we should familiarize the minds of people in the mother country, especially those whom we desire to attract hither as immigrants. Such facts speak for themselves, and are intelligible to all. It is by accurately representing our material progress, by pointing out the special advantages which we enjoy, and by exhibiting a true picture of our social condition and our solid prosperity, that we may most securely calculate upon this colony obtaining the preference as a field of settlement over others which are diligently inviting immigration. The International Exhibition in London will furnish both the occasion and the means of effectually disseminating this information. As has been already suggested, a concise summary of the material facts embodied in the essays attached to the catalogue of the Victorian Exhibition should be prepared, printed, and stereotyped, and tens of thousands of copies distributed gratuitously by our agent. They should be sown broadcast throughout Great Britain during the year 1862, while the public mind is in a ferment at home with the excitement caused by the 'World's Fair;' and if followed up by popular lectures, and accompanied by the appropriation, as proposed, of one-third of the proceeds of the land sales to the purposes of assisted immigration, there can be no question that a stream of population would set in towards these shores, augmenting in volume year by year, and carrying us forward in a career of prosperity more substantial in its character than anything we have yet witnessed.

"Fortunately, this is not a party or a class question. It affects men of all classes and of all parties. Steady immigration implies better wages and constant employment for the labourer and the artizan, greater activity in the work-

shops, more customers for the tradesman, more consumers for the produce of the farmer and the vine-grower, more land fenced and cleared, more houses built and occupied, more townships established, more clients for the lawyer and patients for the doctor, more animation in every department of industry, a gradual rise in the value of all property, a better security for every description of investment, and, in proportion as the population settles on the soil, a diminished liability to those inconveniences which at present result from a *stampede* of ten or twenty thousand miners to a gold-field lying outside the boarders of our own colony. Immigration has ceased to find opponents among even the ignorant and the prejudiced, and much may be done to foster it, both by the Government and the commissioners of the Exhibition, by the dissemination of information in Great Britain, through the agencies indicated above."

The Adelaide correspondent of the *Patriot* writes thus of his colony:—

"We have in this colony 1,500,000 acres of land inclosed, of which about one-third is under cultivation; but we have 159,000,000 acres of land within the present boundaries of the colony, and there will in all probability be another 100,000,000 acres annexed to us on the westward very shortly. Here, then, we have a territory about SEVEN AND A HALF TIMES as large as England and Wales, and if only one-tenth of this vast area be cultivable it will support 6,500,000 people at the same rate per square mile as the present sparse population of the colony, for we have but 130,000 people by the census of this year. Yet these madmen would say, Keep out (or, at least, do not bring in) the English labourer to occupy these fruitful hills and plains that only await the hand of man to cause them to yield

their increase. This they do under the vain fear that wages would be brought down below their present extravagant rate."

At the anniversary banquet of the Australian Association, held in Freemasons' Tavern on the night of February 12, 1862, it being the seventy-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Australian colonies, the Duke of Newcastle said of all the five Australian colonies:—

"When before in the history of the world had such a sight been seen as a vast continent which, within the lives of existing men, had been uninhabited by a single Englishman, but was now the site of several large and flourishing colonies? The head of the government, for which he was returning thanks, might remember, although very young, the foundation of these colonies, for all but two of them had sprung up within twenty years, and the youngest (Queensland) was yet but three years old. And now what was the population of those Australian colonies? They possessed a population of 1,250,000; a revenue of the comparatively enormous amount of £6,500,000. They carried on an export trade which occupied 1,500,000 tons of shipping in the carriage of exports valued at £21,000,000, while the imports amounted to £25,000,000, of which no less than £16,000,000 came from the mother country. These facts disproved the idea that colonization was a lost art, and also proved that colonies were of use and advantage even in the low pecuniary aspect of the question. Within the last ten years no less than £100,000,000 worth of gold had been exported from Australia, and principally to this country. This remarkable operation had been conducted without the occurrence of those disastrous events which

had been anticipated by some persons, for during that very period of ten years the number of acres under cultivation in those colonies rose from 60,000 to 300,000, and the export of wool had increased in value from £800,000 to £2,000,000. That was the material evidence of prosperity. He could not say, however, that he approved the democratic spirit in which some measures had been conceived, and he doubted whether an institution—manhood suffrage —which had not been thought suitable for the old country, was well fitted for a population that was constantly moving and did not possess those established rights and interests which were to be found here. Although he felt regret upon that subject he did not despair. . . . It was, however, true in one sense that we had lost the art of colonization, for the rule by force of arms was gone, but we had acquired another and a better art, the government of our colonies by the force of mutual affection and interest; and he hoped that the day might never return when a single red-coat should fire a shot or point a bayonet in hostility at any British colonist. If any colony wished to separate from us—if they thought their strength was sufficient to allow them to stand alone—we should not seek to restrain them by force."—*Times*, February 13, 1862.

When New South Wales was first colonised the Blue Mountains appeared the boundary of all possible advance. They are part of that great backbone of mountains that run along the eastern coast at varying distances of from fifty to a hundred and fifty miles from the sea, from Cape Wilson to 25th degree of south latitude, at an average height of 3,500 feet, and then at much lower height run on to the end of the continent at Cape York.

Lawson, a settler, passed this mountain first in search of strayed cattle, about 1813, as colonists say; and then the torrent of population burst inwards and swarmed over the western slopes, plains and downs, taking possession of sheep and cattle-runs along the vast tributaries of the Murray. But wide deserts of stone, sand, and scrub appeared to bound further advance toward the west; and even science pronounced the vast interior of the continent arid desert or sterile salt marsh—the bed of a retreated sea. But so it was with Africa till Dr. Livingstone revealed its central regions to be, what the natives called them "Linotkanoka," rivers on rivers. Though the interior of Australia is not "rivers on rivers," yet it is not deserts on deserts, as the late expeditions of the enterprising Sturt and the unfortunate Burke have proved. They have done for central, what Leichardt and Kennedy did for north-eastern, Australia.

Recent and authentic explorations set at rest the question as to the habitableness of vast regions of interior Australia. Reservoirs, artesian wells, and other means of irrigation, in addition to lakes and rivers, will no doubt come in due time to enable man to conquer and replenish that part of the earth. Telegraphic wires already enable Melbourne to communicate with Brisbane, and when colonies shall have been established on Albert River and Nicol Bay, railways will spread their network over

the vast regions which will seek interchange of the commodities of their different climates. Better settlements than that on Swan River are in reserve for the western shores of Australia. The *Times* of January 29, 1862, gave an account, in a leading article, of the recent expedition of the Dolphin, under command of F. T. Gregory, to explore the region inward from Nicol Bay, and if possible discover a supposed river that drains the interior. While the expedition failed in the latter object, it ascertained the existence of pasturage and arable land to sustain a flourishing colony. From the ship, as a basis of operations, two expeditions were undertaken. "In the first trip 780 geographical miles, in the second 985 were travelled over. Within the comparatively narrow limits of the route pursued, there were discovered 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 acres of land fit for grazing purposes, about a tenth portion of which was pronounced suitable for agricultural purposes also. As it was, we must be content to learn that there seems no reason why a counterpart of the Swan River settlement should not be established on the north-western shores of Australia. There are good meadow lands, rivers, tolerable supplies of fish, including eels and pearl oysters, bread fruits, melons, wild figs 'well-tasted,' sweet plums 'very palatable,' trees of various kinds, and beautiful flowers. Australia, in short, as far as we can learn,

from these successive expeditions, is neither a desert nor a morass. It is a country with good capabilities and a fine climate, and if that is the prospect before our colonists, we may safely rely on Anglo-Saxon enterprise for developing the resources of their adopted land." Albeit Australia has no Mississippi, yet it reveals capabilities of sustaining not merely a million and a half inhabitants—its present probable number—but a hundred millions. It would not require great exercise of imagination to see it the seat of the future empire of the South—an imperial sun amid constellations of southern isles—a mighty empire saved from the double curse of slavery and mobocracy, and proud of the parent country which blessed it with liberty and light.

The exodus from overcrowded starving Lancashire is now quickening apace. The government of Queensland have appropriated £100,000 to aid emigration to their colony; and their agent in London accepts the offer of the Society of Manchester Overlookers in factories to send out families which they recommend, at the rate of one hundred families every alternate month. Whether men be drawn or driven to obedience, God's original commission to man must be obeyed—replenish and subdue the earth. As this goes on AUSTRALIA will become more and more important.

CHAPTER I.

"ERIN MAVOURNEEN—ERIN GO-BRAGH."

It was by the early dawn of an autumn morning, in the year 1832, that Lawrence Struilby left his father's house, in one of the midland counties of Ulster, to emigrate to Australia. He had spent twenty-two years in the warm home under that straw-thatched roof. There his spirit had opened to the love of father, mother, brothers and sisters, and he could not leave it without tender movements of the heart. No one, except the two youngest boys, went to bed on that night before "Larry's convoy" left Sycamore farm-house; and both these were up hours before day to hear the talk of servants and gossips around the ingle-nook in the kitchen, and to mix with cousins, uncles, aunts, and neighbours in the parlour festivities. Nearly all the talk was about Larry's past, present, and future. He himself divided his attentions between both circles till the hour came for departing, for he had to walk some five miles to the nearest post-town to say farewell to his sister, and take coach for his sea-port to embark for Liverpool. His form was erect and vigorous as usual; but his tones were

in a minor key, and his countenance thoughtful. Indeed, as he patted the dusky head of his faithful old friend "Dragon," and looked for the last time into the affectionate face of the old dog, the tears gathered in his eyes. The loudly-expressed parting sorrows of servants and neighbours he bore right manfully; but to bid farewell to his mother, that was the test of strength. The usually strong voice of his father led in prayer, asking a valedictory blessing on the eldest son then leaving the family circle. That firm voice was rather husky, and more than once trembled; but the act and attitude of prayer gave a much-coveted opportunity for relief by tears to mother and son. The elder Struilby, true to his paradoxical nature —of hiding love where most he loved—soon appeared quite calm, if not joyful, and with soldierly promptitude—for he was an old soldier—told his son it was time to go, or he would not have time to say farewell to Mary. Lawrence screwed his courage up, and bade adieu to his two younger brothers and all who were not to be of "the convoy." He embraced his mother and broke down into tears, for he felt it like rending his heart to part with that best and wisest and ever-loving friend. Agnes Struilby, amid sobs and tears, told her son if he did not do well to be sure to return soon to his father and mother's house, and make God his friend. What a picture of grief

and love was that mother, standing with clasped hands and streaming eyes, looking after her son and the company that escorted him, till a turn in the road hid him from her eyes! Her two youngest sons wept in sympathy by her side. She soon, however, went to her stronghold—that little closet off the parlour, where she so often finds a throne of grace and a Father that seeth in secret. There she formed the resolution to pray thrice a day for her first-born son, till either he returned home, or she should be called to her home in heaven. She had long been acquainted with grief. She was the last survivor of her father's once numerous family. She had mourned over the early death of her second daughter; and by the golden locks had, with her own hand, drawn her third daughter out of the well where she was drowned. To use a borrowed figure, her "heart was a passion flower, that enclosed the crown of thorns and the cross of Christ." She took her sorrows, however, as the appointment of far-reaching paternal love; and this additional one, inflicted by the departure of her manly, loving, yet impulsive, inexperienced Lawrence, was another thorn that touched the quick, but for the bearing of which she sought grace to help in time of need.

While the two brothers, next in age to Lawrence, with his father and friends accompanied him, a trifling incident somewhat diverted his grief. A red-breast came out of the holly hedge and hopped

at the distance of a few paces before them for upwards of a furlong. Then, mounting the topmost spray of a bush in the hedge, poured forth his hearty song in the sun's rising beams, as if saying to the pensive company, and especially to the young emigrant—"Cheer up, He who feeds me without store-house or barn, will care for and sustain thee, O thou of little faith." Larry knew the little favourite, and had long held sacred its nest under the root of the great white poplar in the bank over the horse-pond. Had his heart uttered itself, it would have replied—"Farewell, little friend; a long farewell; you are near your nest, but I am going to put the ocean between me and mine—your sun is rising, but clouds are in my sky."

Every step helped to take him from the old familiar scenes that had woven their memories into the vital tissues of his warm heart. In another hour he had bidden his only sister adieu, with a tenderness next to that of parting with his mother. She thrust into his hand a gift of money he would need; and taking his seat on the mail coach, he waved his last adieu to the hearts that in this wide, wide world loved him best. Next evening, with Jerrold Lock, the companion of his travel, he saw the shores of Derry Lough recede from the ship that left Ireland and home behind. Never before did he feel as he felt then. With his last view of his country he said, what often he had sung—"Erin mavourneen, Erin go-bragh."

CHAPTER II.

LAWRENCE'S ACCOUNT OF THE VOYAGE OUT.

THE following is the account of his voyage, given by Lawrence Struilby some years afterwards :—

It was a great disappointment to us that we did not get by the vessel that bore our country's name —the Hibernia; but it was well for us we did not, for she was burned on the voyage. We could not wait for the unexpected delay of the Hibernia, and the agent in Liverpool would not return our passage money, till we applied to the Mayor of the town. The next vessel bound for Australia was the ship William, belonging to A. B. S. & Co. She was a poor little craft of 350 tons burden, but buffetted the waves nobly, or rather was badly cuffed and shaken by them; and, after a passage of four months and four days, landed us safely at Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land. We sailed on November 6, 1832, and landed March 10th of the next year.

To old sailors the voyage would, I suppose, have appeared nothing extraordinary; to me it was all new then, and it still seems chequered with the awful, the horrible, and the amusing. We

encountered a stiff gale in the Bay of Biscay, which carried away our jibboom and part of our bulwarks. It also carried away, from living graves to Davy's locker, several vociferous Irish pigs, and a lot of poultry and ducks which Neptune snatched from first cabin passengers; but both cabin and steerage passengers (Lock and I were of the latter) were too sick to perceive how the sea-god was working towards the equality, though not to the liberty and fraternity, of us mortals. When the gale abated and all was again made snug, we got on tolerably well, till, when nearing the Cape, our captain died. He was as much the votary of Bacchus as of Neptune; indeed he appeared only to serve the one that he might worship the other day and night. He did not make his appearance on deck for days, and when, at last, he came up with bloated purple cheeks and eyes like boiled gooseberries, he appeared very ill able to take either himself or us to port. His brother, however, was first mate, and a good sailor, and kept the vessel all right. The next time the captain came up, the Union Jack was wrapped round him; and, with weights to head and feet, there was launched on his last voyage—another victim of the bottle. It was really horrible to think of the wreck of such a noble-looking fellow and to hear the sullen plunge that consigned him to the gulfs and monsters of the deep. It was also horrible to reflect on what might be our own fate under the care of his brother

a comparatively untried man. Not long before he had been carpenter, and was raised over the second mate, who, on the ground of longer service, clamourously contended to take the command. It might have risen to a mutiny, but that we, the passengers, firmly took side with the first mate, and turned the scale in his favour. Something still more frightful awaited us; for, in a few days after the captain's death, we were caught in a "black squall," as the sailors called it. The wind suddenly changed and backed the sails, and carried away our three topmasts and part of our rigging over the ship's side, while she was running sternways at the rate of seven knots an hour. The old boatswain, a very clever sailor, told me if they had been three minutes longer cutting away the wreck, we must all have gone to the bottom, as the ship's gunwales were under water, and the water was pouring down the main hatch in torrents, and to all human appearance every hope of safety was vanished. But our brave sailors got the rigging and spars cut clear of the ship in a few minutes. She was got before the wind, and the stay and mainsail kept her clear of the heavy sea, until the topmasts were put to right again. Fortunately we had two carpenters aboard, who were passengers, and they greatly helped to expedite repairs. There were seventy-four souls on board, including crew and passengers; and this number, with their luggage,

created not a little confusion in such small space. Indeed, our poor little craft was like a feather in the tempest, and we were shaken, and tossed, and sifted about most unmercifully by the waves. I never got such an awful idea of God as in that squall. What poor creatures were we in the grip of the ocean? and what is the ocean but a drop to Him? We reeled to and fro over the dreadful dance of the billows, and staggered from wave to wave like drunken men. And yet, there was something more sublime than the ocean in the collectedness of our old boatswain and the men, in their efforts to set the ship right. Indeed, as often in scenes of danger I afterwards proved, a power seems to awake and rise up in the soul that bids defiance to danger and fate—a power that seems to say to them "ye can only kill the body, but have no more that ye can do." I must say I never have been calmer in all my life than when death appeared near, and I take no credit for it; for the narration is more exciting than the reality. Is it that danger stuns fear, or awakens a power not needed at other times? In fact, mosquitos by land are worse than tigers; and the troubles of cooking are worse to steerage passengers than storms by sea. But if conscience be awakened and guilty, then there are two storms at once, and that in the bosom is the more terrible of the two.

I should tell you that my mate, Lock, and I

dissolved partnership after the gale in the Bay of Biscay. I need not say on what intimate terms we were, and how we had all things common, as to sea-store and utensils. The sorrows of leaving home, and the pains of sea-sickness, for a while made our communion tolerable; but sympathy was too weak in us, and number one too strong in us, for this always to last. Besides, as he was nearly twenty years older, and twice twenty years more prudent than I was, he thought I ought to defer and obey. It is true I was a soft fish, that kept my shell wide open; but he put in his finger too far, and got nipt. He was dreadfully sea-sick, and uttered by turns all sounds in the scale of woe, from the moans of toothache to the groans of colic and the cries of labour. By the law of contradiction, this made me bear my sickness in silence. Passengers and sailors laughed at him as he rolled and roared. I sometimes laughed a ghastly laugh, but was angry at his drawing such unpleasant attention to us. One fellow would say—"He's a holloring on his mother." Another—"There won't soon be a bit of green in him, though he's from the Hemerald Hile." Another—"He's a-clearing out to fill up before we cross the line." Another—"Holla, mate, take your ups and downs easier, and don't cut such a swell." Lock thought I ought to dissolve in sympathy for him, and would not believe I could be ill at all, as I did not give tongue. I

told him if I were to die I should do so quietly, decently, as a Christian: he did not think me one, or think I could do so. He daily taxed my humility by servile work, till I thought, as his appetite was improving, he should share the toils of cooking and cleaning. He persisted; and we came to division of luxuries and utensils. He would claim this, that, and the other thing, that I did not need, that he thought he did. I stood before him and said—"Jerrold, if there be a division it must go right through, or——." Through it went, and we parted; but soon I saw his superior diplomacy, which I often saw afterwards. He had lately, when recovering, been much in the society of an old gentleman and his daughter, who belonged to the Society of Friends, and were second cabin passengers. Old Jeremiah and Miss Larder were fond of good tea and its savoury etceteras, and had not only taste but faculty, as the Yankees call it. Lock had similar taste and talent. I was deficient in the latter. He often made presents of our honey and raspberry vinegar to the Larders, and on the same principle as the prudent steward in the gospel; for when he left me, as there was a berth in the second cabin vacant, he made all right with the steward of the ship, and the Larders took him into their more comfortable habitation. He had premeditated secession and fixed his plan. How fond he was of that word "plan!" He always had

half a dozen "plans" hatching in his brain, which he carried so steadily leaning forward. From his gait, you could know that he was afraid of injuring his "plans" by any violent motion. I was at first a little chagrined at being left without several articles I used, when we had all things common; but the removal of himself and his boxes left me more space, and took away part of the groanings of the creation. I soon grew social with shipmates, many of whom proved unselfish, obliging fellows, whom I afterwards met in the colonies. In fact, I then began to learn the lesson that, there are two classes of affairs about which you should not fret—those you cannot help and those you can. The first mate, then captain, became my friend, and ordered all my cooking to be done for me, and let me walk on the quarter-deck; and all things went smooth enough. After we crossed the line, we felt in want of part of that gale, that we had got in surplus before. The prodigal wind was spent and became insolvent. We got becalmed. Some of us rejoiced in swimming. One day I was out and heard the old boatswain shouting to us to come on board. A boat was lowered for the others. I made my way, and was hauled up the vessel's side. The old tar had seen the shark's companion—or rather forerunner—a little fish swimming near the ship. In less than three minutes the water was bristling with the great coulter-like back-fins of a

dozen of these ocean tigers, that I suppose smelt us from afar as vultures do their prey. A piece of meat was put on a great hook, and by a line fastened to the capstan, a huge shark was drawn on board. This was exciting play, and there was some danger in shunning the snap of the monster's teeth, and the strokes of his tail. Finally his great head was cut off, and a little tailor on board, who was a great scripturian, proved the possibility of Jonah's going down the fish's throat; for he really passed through the open jaws of the shark, though not into "the fish's belly." In prejudice and peevishness, and perhaps in diminutiveness, there was a resemblance between the tailor and the prophet; and, leaving miracle out of the question, there is no saying what such people might not do.

It was very pleasant, after spending more than the third of a year on board our little tub, to pass up by Bruny Island one fine morning, and sailing through Storm Bay, perfectly calm, to drop anchor in the broad, beautiful Derwent, beside Hobart Town, and to hail mother earth and stretch one's crippled legs on shore.

CHAPTER III.

LAWRENCE GLANCES AT VAN DIEMEN'S LAND THROUGH THE TWO EYES OF HISTORY; AND TAKES A CRUISE THROUGH THE INTERIOR.

You desire me to be "eminently descriptive in my narrative of bush-life, and to look through both eyes of history, wide-awake as I proceed." Well then, now for a short-hand sketch of two years' bush-life in Van Diemen's Land. But though my eye is not yet dim, nor my natural force abated, I fear I shall not be either very bright or forcible; for things most strange to people at home are so familiar to colonists, that we are likely to think too trivial the things that you might most wish to know. There is no use in my telling you, for your geography will, that this island is nearly opposite Ireland at different sides of the earth—who knows but we may yet have a tunnel through, or at all events a telegraph around?—or that it is more than two-thirds the size of Ireland, being some 24,000 square miles, about 15,000,000 acres. But, to keep one eye of history open, I may say such is about its extent. The great river on the north is the Thamar, formed by several head-

waters, especially the north and south Esk; and on the Thamar stands Launceston, some fifty miles from the sea. The great river on the south is the Derwent, formed by the junction of the Dee, Shannon, Clyde, Jordan and others. On it, about forty miles from the sea, stands Hobart Town, so called by Collins, its founder, in honour of the then colonial secretary, Lord Hobart. The island is very mountainous, and a great part of it is yet undiscovered, and is given up to the devil—Tasmanian devil-wolf. Hobart Town is laid out in regular streets on undulating hills, and with the Derwent in front and mounts Dromedary in the distance, and Wellington towering behind, to eyes just turned from the watery waste it appeared a picturesque, lovely place. When I saw it bathed in the clear atmosphere, and set in verdure, I began to think grass grows here as well as in Ireland. Though, by the way, all verdure is darker here than in either England or Ireland. Such is a squint at this island with the geographic eye of history. That my narrative may not be one-eyed, let us have a blink with the chronologic eye.

I landed in Hobart Town, March 10, 1833, just twenty-eight years after Collins, with his convicts, founded a settlement there and built the nucleus of the present capital. I landed six years after it had become a colony distinct from those on the larger island, and about three years before the

founding of the Port Philip colony with its capital Melbourne, which was then a waste. I landed some eighteen years before the world's great gold scramble began, causing a rush towards the south pole. When I landed, the energetic and despotic Colonel George Arthur ruled over a population, in which the convict element was the largest. The first sight I saw on landing was a gang of some two hundred convicts working in cross-irons. That is, a bar of iron between their ankles and from it a chain fastened to a belt round their loins. The clank and rattle of the irons were incessant, as they wrought, and it drowned every other sound. It was anything but like what travellers describe as the lulling sounds of sheep and cattle bells in sweet Alpine valleys. Alas! it was the wolf-bell rather than the sheep-bell. The convicts were dressed in piebald costume, the one-half white down one side and the one-half black down the other. Nature makes a kind of uniformity between the colour of grouse and stubble, and between fish and the river bottom, to help them to escape; but I suppose government equips its servants on the opposite principle. I was struck with despondence at sight of these degraded-looking fellow-creatures. Their low, scowling, animal looks gave me a better idea of the fall of man than could Boston's Fourfold Estate. And yet, I could not but reflect that if I were in those irons for a few months, I might

be as degraded or desperate as they; and that many have been transported for shooting a stray hare, a pheasant or a deer. "He that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone." After this I saw gang after gang, most of them in yellow, till I got familiar with such sights. Indeed at that time Colonel Arthur was employing convict labour largely on the Derwent, making roads, especially that towards Launceston and the great bridge that spans the noble river. It was perhaps the very best way convict labour could be applied, and it laid the foundation of prosperity for the colonies and set other labour free for other purposes.

Jerrold Lock left for Sydney; and, as my funds were low and there appeared no suitable work in Hobart Town, I and two shipmates set off for a cruise in the interior. Our object was to get some permanent employment, where we could at once earn wages and colonial experience. We went up the Derwent for some ten miles the first day. Here we reached the little road-side inn whose sign was a great black snake. I suppose it was intended to show either that snakes had once been there, or that the inn was a refuge from them. A teetotaller would affirm the venemous reptile to be the emblem of the fiery serpent of alcohol housed there;—the serpent that kills more immigrants than the literal black snakes. The day was very hot, and as our feet were swollen after confinement so long on the little

ship, we were glad of the inn to give us some rest and some ale. We went some ten miles further up the Derwent, to its junction with the Clyde, where stands on a hill the town of New Norfolk. Up the banks of this latter river we made a journey of about a hundred miles, through the settled districts and nearly to its source. The country looked picturesque and fertile. As it was an agricultural district, settlements were nearer to each other than in a pastoral country. There were on all sides abundant crops of all kinds. Apples, peaches, nectarines, apricots, and water melons were fine and plentiful. I was greatly struck with the transparency of the air and the fineness of the climate of Van Diemen's Land. The vegetation appeared very different from that of Ireland. In Ireland at that season—Patrick's day, March 17th—the naked trees would be recovering from winter's bleakness and swelling into bud. Here every tree was an evergreen, or rather an everblue; for the landscape is far from that living green that summer robes it with in Ireland. The trees were of enormous size, some of them great living columns shooting up above 100 and to 150 feet high. Here were great blue or flooded gums near the water; there white gums higher up, their foliage like giants with scanty locks; there stringy barks, with last year's tattered bark shedding off, like grenadiers in rags. There were huge boxes, with hollow boles and

boughs, from which parakeets popped out their bright heads, tier above tier, like beauties looking out of their dressing-room windows; while the opossums slept by day like sots. It was a great pity we had no one to give us lectures on the botany and zoology of the region through which we were passing, each of us expressing that wonder, which, it is said, is the effect of novelty on ignorance. But, in truth, to know what we should eat and where we ourselves should sleep occupied our attention more earnestly than did the knowledge of trees where parrots and opossums eat and slept.

As most of the settlers had been old convicts, they looked on us free immigrants rather coldly; and as we were "raw," without colonial experience, we got no situations to suit us. We were kindly entertained at several places where we called—sometimes sleeping on a sheet of bark in a hut or shed; and in seven days we returned to Hobart Town sick at heart and sore of foot, after a journey of 240 miles. I would have been for trying the bush longer, but there were several gangs of bush-rangers then committing depredations, and blacks and whites were retaliating atrociously on each other. One of my companions, C—, was very timid, and the snapping of a stick or the fall of a leaf made his heart palpitate. The whole aspect of things was really depressing, and from my heart I wished I were back in dear old Ireland amid the

prospects I left. I fear I then wrote a rather despondent letter to my father; but, as my funds were reduced to half-a-crown, and half of that owed for washing, I resolved to do anything that offered, were it but to throw stones to a paver. I went to my box to see something of my stock of clothing. There was plenty of it; but, alas! very unsuited to the climate:—a dress coat with gilt buttons, drawers, trousers, flannels, that would suit Ireland or Iceland, but not Van Diemen's Land. There, too, was a night cap, and when I opened it there fell out a binder, such as I had seen my mother bind round my father's head the only time I ever saw him ill. Poor dear mother, she thought I might be ill in this distant land of strangers! When I opened the binder, there fell out a slip of paper, and written in my mother's hand—"Larry, my dear boy, come home to your parents if you don't succeed." Those words flashed like lightning into my heart and broke up its fountains. Oh, if I could at that moment have returned, how willingly I should have done so! But now I could not return, and I must, by God's blessing, succeed. I must gladden the heart that dictated those words. That heart and others must not be depressed by my turning a great croaker or a great helpless child. I should go and look for work. Yes, but there are the Bible and Hymn Book she wrote my name in and desired me daily to read, were it but

for fifteen minutes. Then I must not forget them or the God of whom they speak. See here is, broadly marked, one of her favourite hymns. Oh, for her faith!

"Peace, doubting heart, my God's I am,
Who formed me man forbids my fear,
Himself hath called me by my name,
Himself protects for ever near;
His blood for me did once atone,
And still he loves and guards his own.

"When passing through the watery deep,
I ask in faith his promised aid,
The waves an awful distance keep,
And shrink from my devoted head;
Fearless their violence I dare;
They cannot harm for God is there.

"When darkness intercepts my skies,
And sorrow's waves around me roll,
When high the storms of passion rise,
And half o'erwhelm my sinking soul;
My soul a sudden calm shall feel,
And hear a whisper 'peace, be still!'"

CHAPTER IV.

TWO YEARS' BUSH LIFE IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND—MEETS A MATE—WONT FLOG—A HOT-HOUSE COCKNEY—TASMANIAN WOLF AND DEVIL—ZOOLOGICAL DISADVANTAGES OF ABORIGINES—BIRDS—DACELO GIGANTEA — FIELD-POLICE — WRONGED HEADS — NATIVES ENTRAPPED—MYSELF FLEECED—ACROSS BASS'S STRAITS.

My heart was not quite in my shoes, but in the way of sinking, when I tumbled across an old hand from Liverpool. His name was H—; he was blowing a cloud as stiff as a Yankee would, in the little parlour of the "Kangaroo." I had on a blue broad-cloth swallow-tail coat with gilt buttons, and looked the greenest of the green. He eyed me from head to heel, not knowing whether he ought to pity or despise. We commenced to yarn. "I s'pose you want a clerkship," said he. "A spade, a rake, a hoe or a pair of shears," quoth I. He shuffled on his seat and said, "I'm going to clear some ground for commissary H— when I get a mate; but the gum stumps (he did *not* mean of teeth) are stiff and take practice to root them; I'll lend you tools if you try it. He gives

two shillings a block." We commenced to clear next day. When I peeled off, he laid his hand on my shoulder and thought it ought to do, when better hardened. He set to work with his might to try my mettle. I did not appear to mind it, but pitched hard into the block, and before night I had stump for stump out with him. The next day we wrought at separate stumps, and I could have gone a-head of him at my ease. He was delighted, and could hardly believe his eyes. So I had a right to thank experience of the spade and axe in old Ireland's hedges and ditches, on my father's farm. We *cleared* more than seven, and sometimes ten, shillings a day. Till at last the commissary thought it easy work and wanted to lower our wages. We rebelled and threw up—don't be shocked—our hatchets. He got a lot of government men to work, and they could not take out three blocks a day, where we took out three times three. So much for *free* versus slave labour. Even a scream of the cat-o'-nine-tails couldn't make the stumps dance. And so, we were engaged again at the old figure and went on like fun, while the old boss frowned at getting work done so fast and well. It was really fine, and enough to cure sea-sickness, home-sickness and sun-sickness. I found my mate an old bush-hand, first rate at cedar-sawing, and at splitting and fencing, and yarning and smoking, and an altogether-honest fellow;

but, alas! his sovereigns soon grew too hot and riddled his purse. He wrought like a mule and spent like an ass, and then girthed himself up for another lay-to at the timber. I tried to keep my purse-strings decently close, and after seven weeks' rooting out blocks, engaged to manage a large farm of land for a friend of his, by Mr. H's recommendation. I was the only free person on the establishment. All the labourers, some twelve, were government men (convicts) assigned to my employer. I was allowed a lad of about fourteen years of age as hut-keeper and cook. He also was a prisoner. I soon found my situation a critical one. I could not please my employer without getting the men flogged. This I would not do. I had experience enough already to know that that sort of cruelty was generally needless, and always ill-connected—was the child of folly, the sister of passion, the mother of bush-ranging, and the grandmother of endless murders. I could tell you shocking stories of the cruelty of overseers and masters, at last driving men to the bush, after they had, in revenge perhaps, laid open the skull of a master or overseer with spade or axe. I resolved that, by God's help, I never would get the flesh of a fellow-creature lacerated by the cat-o'-nine-tails—and so I left. Mr. —— had heard of me as a free immigrant and proposed to me to rent a farm of 140 acres from him at

£100 a year. I did so with a young man from London, a free immigrant like myself. He had some little capital, but no knowledge of a farm, no more than if he had just been transplanted out of the hot-house—a real Cockney exotic. We kept it for a year, and made some money. Our farm was situated about seventeen miles from Hobart Town, in a place called the Black Brush, near to Brighton; and the little Jordan ran through the centre of it. It was bounded by hills on either side, and these abounded with kangaroos, opossums, bandicoots, and native cats. There were also rock-wallibys and opossum-rats. But more of these again. On my own farm, and not more than a hundred yards from our hut, I first saw the Tasmanian wolf. I suppose it had by some means strayed from its haunts in the hills after prey. The two kangaroo-dogs found it, and after a severe struggle—for it is very fierce and powerful—they killed it. It was the size of a large mastiff, nearly black, having bands of grey running parallel to each other from the back down the sides, like rib-marks, but largest about the rump. Its head is large and well armed with teeth. The female has a pouch in her abdomen—like the kangaroo and all other native animals—where the young is introduced immature, and hatched, or rather nursed, to maturity. (Hence its scientific name *Thylacinus Cynocephalus*—the pouch-bearing dog-headed quad-

ruped.) It is the most powerful carnivorous beast of these colonies. In its mountain haunts it is lion-king. The Tasmanian devil is a poor, black, bull-terrier-like fellow compared to him. I do not think he is called "devil" because of power; but because he is black, ugly, insidious, irreclaimable, and will devour his own little fiends.

The Tasmanian menagerie is very poor. I don't wonder the native blacks were a poor people, and had little time for improvement. They had no beasts of burden; for none but a monkey could ride a kangaroo. They had no creatures to give food or clothing, nothing better than a bandicoot or kangaroo to domesticate; and these, like the swine, only can serve by their death. What would Ireland be with only pigs, and without poultry, asses, horses, cows, &c.? What would England be without bread, cheese, beef, and horses? What would Arabs be without horses or camels? The black man could only be a hunter, and his wife, alas! is his beast of burden. I have a word to say about the Tasmanian blacks; but first a word about Tasmanian birds. I delighted to see, hear, and shoot or pet them. The parrot tribe are most numerous, and much the same as in Australia. There are the white cockatoos, screeching, whirling, and fit for nothing while living but to enliven the scene—dead, they make good soup and eat like pullets. There are their coloured brethren the black

cockatoos, bold and joyous; for the white ones have no right to enslave them for the crime of colour. I see them, however, greatly wronged by an express-speed English observer. He affirms they have no top-knots. He hastily confounded with the black cockatoo the macaw parrot, which in everything resembles it except that *it* has no top-knot. If you watch a black cockatoo when he perches he instantly shoots up a most splendid knot streaked on the under side with scarlet. But tourist-naturalists don't take time to note particulars. The species of the parrot tribe I noticed as most abundant in Tasmania, were the lorry, king parrot, green leek, blue mountain, rosella, ground parrot and parakeet. My favorite bird in that region was the laughing jackass. He is also called the settler's clock, from the loud-laughing, knavish, droll noises he makes at six o'clock in the morning and six in the evening. According to nature's usual economic rule, what he wants she has provided him with bountifully, and what he does not, she has denied. He wants a powerful bill—and therefore a large head—to pick insects from the bark of huge trees, and also to kill serpents. This latter beneficent work he does by pouncing on the snake asleep, and lifting it high in the air lets it drop till he stuns, kills, and eats it. Ploughing of fields and burning of grass kill serpents; but his comic highness, *dacelo gigantea*, as the books call him, does more to

thin small serpents than any other means. Hence he is a favourite with blacks and whites. He does not require, like the swallow, to catch prey on the wing, and so does not need the swallow's forked tail, on which to turn as on a double pivot. He therefore has a rather parsimonious, at least economical, tail compared with his size, especially with his head and bill. There is a smaller species, about the size of your Irish thrush, that makes one of the finest cage-whistlers I have heard. The Derwent magpie is also a fellow of most truly musical pipe and great loquacity, but as thievish as magpies usually are. The largest fresh-water eels I ever saw, I used to kill in the Jordan; they weighed from one to six pounds. In the same stream I used to kill a most pleasant fish of a pound weight; it was so like a grilse or young salmon, I used to call it the little salmon. I have caught as many as one hundred of a night. There were no water-keepers there. *Black* swans were found in the island, but I did not shoot any.

During the time I was there, bush-ranging atrocities were very common: police and settlers could hardly keep the island from barbarism. There was a force called the Field Police, who were volunteer convicts that had served a certain time, and by additional service got a ticket-of-leave or emancipation. They were hated by all classes, for they had power without principle. Very few of

them, I believe, but would have sworn a man's life away for a crown. It was very common, in those two years of which I write, for government to offer a pardon and a free passage to England to any convict, who should capture an armed bush-ranger, living OR dead. And it was no uncommon thing to see one come down the country in company with a policeman, having a man's head wrapped up in a piece of blanket, or in a pocket handkerchief. Sometimes the policeman's testimony was the only means of identifying the head as having belonged to the body of a bush-ranger. Heads were worth money and freedom in those days; and many an innocent head was sworn guilty, for the sake of the price set on it.

While living on the Jordan, I went to see the remnant of the aborigines in Hobart Town, after they had been entrapped by command of government. They had retaliated on the settlers, and speared both men and cattle not a few; and, I suppose, Colonel Arthur thought them as incorrigible and untameable as Tasmanian devils or wolves. A man called "Black Robinson" had their confidence, and persuaded them that he would lead them to spear the Governor and the military, and take Hobart Town, and re-possess the country, as well as take beef and mutton to revel in for years. With him they came towards Hobart Town. Along the way their warriors would set up a sheet of bark, and yell

and throw spears at it, transfixing it as they expected to do the Governor. Robinson lauded their prowess, and decoy-birded them on to an ambush, where every man, woman, and child were captured, and under strong military escort brought into Hobart Town. When I saw them they looked as dejected as wild beasts worn out with struggles in the net. They appeared a much less noble specimen of savages than the tribes I subsequently saw in the other colonies. They were afterwards shipped off to the Furneaux or Flinder's Islands, in Bass's Straits. I never afterwards saw a native in Van Diemen's Land.*

* "In Van Diemen's Land, the drama of the destruction of the aborigines took another turn. In the course of colonization, the outcasts of society occupying the more advanced or interior stations in the country, and accustomed to treat with contempt any rights which their brutal strength could bear down, invaded the natives' hunting-grounds, seized on their women, and gave rise to that system of bloody attacks and reprisals which provoked a general rise on the side of both whites and blacks, and ended finally in the capture and transportation of the latter, in 1835, to Flinder's Island (Bass's Straits); a measure severe and sanguinary, and incumbent on the government, in order to put an end to those solitary murders which began to belie the existence of civilization in the country. At the epoch of their deportation, in 1835, the number of the natives amounted to 210! Visited by me in 1842, that is after the interval of seven years, they mustered only 54 individuals! And while each family of the interior of New South Wales, uncontaminated by contact with the whites, swarms with children, those of Flinder's Island had, during eight years, an accession of only 14 in number."—*Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, by P. E. De Strzelecki, pp. 332—5.

"After a while, to their great joy, they were reconducted to their own country—to Brown's River, near Hobart Town—where the diminishing and tiny band is attended to by the colonial government. At the beginning of 1859 they numbered altogether five old men and nine old women. No children are now born. . . . There is something lamentable in thus witnessing the final passing away of a distinctive family of man."—*Encyclop. Brit.*, Ed. 8th, Art. "Tasmania."

When I had resided in the island about two years, I received a newspaper advertising for me, and also a letter from my old shipmate and countryman, Jerrold Lock, asking me to go to a situation in the employment of himself and co-squatters. I resolved to go, forgetting the past so far as it was unpleasant. I took stock, and was worth £70 clear. When I reached Hobart Town, there I met an old shipmate in great distress. He was a Londoner. His wife was ill, and all his children had hooping-cough. He persuaded me to lend him £50. Soft as an oyster without its shell I let him take the pearl. Afterwards, when I sent a friend to ask him for the money, which he was to forward to Sydney in two months, he affirmed that he did not know such a person as myself existed. By the little schooner Guernsey Lass, I reached Sydney in seven days. We sailed on the 14th March, 1835. The weather was delightful. The sea rippled and flashed like fire at night, and numberless black and spermaceti whales spouted and sported round our little craft by day. The 140 miles of Bass's Straits are dotted with islands, that, I have no doubt, were once an isthmus. We dropped anchor in Sydney cove, close by the Queen's Wharf. But every one knows Sydney, and I go on to bush-life.

CHAPTER V.

ACROSS THE BLUE MOUNTAINS TO BATHURST PLAINS —ASPECTS OF THE SCENERY—NATURAL HISTORY —A BREAK DOWN IN THE DARK—BATHURST— THE CITY OF THE PLAIN—FIRST MEETING WITH NATIVES—JERROLD LOCK—LAWRENCE ACTS AS AN AMATEUR UNDERTAKER FOR A DESERTED GIN— FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A BUSH-RANGER.

Led by the promises of his friend and shipmate to leave his situation in Van Diemen's Land for one on the Bathurst Plains, Lawrence resolved to follow the tide of emigration across those Blue Mountains, which, until 1813, were the dreaded and unpenetrated barriers of New South Wales toward the west. In the middle of March, in the Australian autumn, he set out by early mail-coach, and after a stage of fifteen miles reached Paramatta, where stands the governor's summer residence. Nineteen miles more brought him to Penrith. At that time the metropolitan county of Cumberland was but very partially cleared, and deeds of bush-ranging villainy were often perpetrated where the traveller is now as secure as in the county of Middlesex;—indeed, more secure than citizens are

in London, during these nights and days of garotte-panic, in the autumn of A.D. 1862. Lawrence was a good listener; and the driver regaled him with many narratives, that did not tend to raise his estimation of the security of travellers through the region then around and before him. As, however, he had little to lose but his life, and he did not suspect robbers would care much for that, he pursued his way devoid of fear and inspired with his unfailing constitutional hope. After crossing the Emu Plains and the punt-ferry of the Nepean, he, on the second day, commenced the ascent of the Blue Mountains by the road planned by the indomitable Sir Thomas Mitchell (for Macquarie's road by Mount York was then superseded) and executed by convict labour. This great mountain-road to the interior ascends and winds for some sixty miles over these Blue Mountains; sometimes reaching as high as 2,250 feet above the level of the sea, sometimes skirting fearful precipices, and sometimes, as at the Victoria Pass, giving the traveller to look down into terrific depths over a timber railing on one side. He traversed it by the mail conveyance, and preferred doing with a few hours' sleep for two successive nights, so as to reach his destination on the fourth day. Many objects of interest met his eye in this journey. Some were painful, such as the wretched gangs of convicts working in irons at government work

and under the terror of the lash. Alas! what miserable-looking castaways of the mother country were there! Lawrence's imagination often conjured up mournful pictures of their past, present and future. Miserable also were the shieling grog-shops and public-houses he passed in these solitudes, where he could hear the voice of mingled laughter and cursing; and where, no doubt, the bush-ranger often spent his blood-stained plunder, as well as the up-country labourer his hard-earnt wages. But here nature opened up to him a new and bold page of her wild magnificence, savage ruggedness interspersed with touches of softness and beauty. Sometimes, as in approaching the convict station of Blackheath, the road was as level as a plain; sometimes it dipped rapidly down; sometimes, as at Hassan's Walls, it passed under castellated crags 500 feet high. Never had he heard in such perfection, as he did here by break of day, the donkey bray and hyena laugh, and other mockeries of the laughing jackass, that embodiment of ornithic drollery, as strange in look as it is in note. Of this bird it may be said, as has been of the beast whose name he bears, that he is neither beautiful nor ugly, but a medium between the two—pre-eminently picturesque. Here, for the first time, he saw that rare and splendid—but unjustly called black—cockatoo, with raven body it is true, but with a tail of brilliant stripes of orange and

red. Here, too, he could see nature's scavengers at work—the white ants and black eagles. Gum trees of brown and leaden hue, with scant foliage and not remarkable for size, formed the great body of vegetation; but iron-barks, and stringy-barks, and the round, smooth, white gums, and the refreshingly green casuarinas or she-oaks were often seen; and not unfrequently the scrub was interspersed with mountain ash and with saxifrages, delicately-flowered, with showy euphorbias, epacrises, boronias and acacias. Here, for the first time, he saw and tasted the native cherry, or exocarpus, the stone of which—inversely to that of our cherry, and like the bones of the oyster—grows outside. He could not resist the temptation to leap down and pluck that cone-like spike of splendid crimson bloom—the waretah, that can only be found in the mountains at certain heights, and grows on a stem from six to twelve feet high, adorned with oak-like leaves, and justly called "the queen of the bush." Yet withal the journey was monotonous and wearisome, and late on the last night nearly fatal. They had passed Solitary Creek by sun-down, and darkness set in ere they could reach the station beyond Mount Lambey, one of the highest peaks over which the road ascends. It became very dark; and, as their horses descended, the driver could hardly see to guide them at a most dangerous turn of the road. Suddenly one of their wheels broke down, and in

the dark they could not put it to rights. The driver went on to the station for torches and assistance, leaving Lawrence in charge of the horses. With difficulty he found his way to it; and, when he returned, the torch revealed the fact that he had been driving in a direction which, in a few yards, would have plunged them down into a ravine, where horses and men must have perished. The driver stood aghast; but on Lawrence's mind there flashed like lightning the thought of that Almighty and very present Help, without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the earth. He inly praised that merciful Providence which had saved them from being the prey of the eagles and dingos in that savage ravine. Next day he reached Bathurst, that rising brick town—"that city of the plains" —some hundred and twenty miles south-west of Sydney, on the Macquarie river, which afterwards became so famous for the Ophir and Turon diggings. It then had no church, but a small episcopal one, of which Rev. — Lovewool was clergyman, while it had a long, low prison, and the public-houses were fronting each other at every corner, and out of all proportion to the town population. But, alas! they were only too well supported by the up-country labourers, who often madly rushed into them with their wages, which they melted down into "nobblers" of neat rum. Poor Lawrence, he little thought the land-shark landlord of one of them should yet bite him, and that he should yet occupy a place in

that low brick prison. He left his trunk and clothes in a public-house in Bathurst, the landlord of which, a great strong Englishman, appeared to take an extraordinary liking to the young, muscular, hearty Hibernian. He directed him to the cattle station of Ash and Alder, about some forty miles from the town.

As to natives, the first tribe of blacks he met in this colony he encountered after dark, half-way between Bathurst and Baroo; that is about twenty miles from this latter place. He saw their camp-fires, but did not know it was a native camp. When he approached, their dogs set on him, and two or three men came up to see what the dogs were at. He innocently asked one of them, in English, where Mr. Walker's station was? For there Lock had appointed to meet him. He looked at his companion and said, significantly, "New chum, I b'lieve." He straightened himself up with all dignity, and said—"Ay, ay; white fellow, Walker, sit down along a name Carumba, up there, I b'lieve." Forthwith king Bogan, with the great brass plate and his name on it suspended on his breast, appeared, and after using up all the English he had, in conclusion, said—"Give some boombilly—bakky, bakky." Lawrence gave him some tobacco, by which he appeared much gratified; and he sent a black to show him the way. King Bogan was a noble-looking black, about six feet two in height, with a long patriarchal beard.

Struilby was soon engaged in the miscellanea of the station in conjunction with Lock, who had charge of the store, and a share in all profits. He had not forgotten his past impressions of Lock's sharp practice on the voyage; but he now found him so kind and cordial that he did believe him truly his friend. Home associations opened his heart, and they talked much and long of old scenes, and their news from home, and their own colonial experience since they parted. Lawrence found Lock a wonderful adept at making life comfortable in the bush. In fact, when he came to see Lock's resources, as developed in his hut-and-store-life, he felt his own inferiority. Lock had splendid poultry and fresh eggs, and cream and butter of the choicest kind. He could beat Lock at boxing, riding, sheep-shearing or shooting; but as to make such savoury pancakes, or such spiced rounds, he must for ever despair. Yet, Lock could ride very well; and, through caution, shunned many knocks and falls that better horsemen did not avoid. One day they rode out to count the sheep under a suspected shepherd, and they came on a deserted encampment of blacks. They found they had fled, though they had been there the preceding day. An old gin was dying, and they had left her to die. Two warm-hearted Irishmen could not bear such a sight. Lawrence alighted, and Lock held his horse while the former raised the dying woman on his shoulders, and bore

her back to the hut, from which they took her out to bury her next day. Lock greatly lauded the strength and tenderness of his friend in thus acting the good Samaritan to the forsaken gin.

Lawrence had not been three weeks at the station till an adroit convict-servant, a north of Ireland man, who had ingratiated himself with Lock, robbed his store, and Lock in great haste sought out Lawrence, to entreat him to capture the run-away, who would probably lurk in the bush till night. Lock had to return to shut up the store; but he promised immediately to follow with arms. Lawrence, in unreasoning impulse, and without arms, either offensive or defensive, started on the chase, while Lock prudently returned to the store, where he found it necessary to stay. They both supposed the robber would make for a certain deserted hut in the bush, and thither Lawrence hastened. He could see by recent tracks the robber was there, and then it occurred to him that he himself was unarmed. He tore out a pointed stake from a fence and advanced; and the robber met him at the door of the hut with a great clasp knife open in his hand. Well it was for Struilby that he had that stake, and could wield it, or in less than a minute that knife should have been in his vitals. The run-away had a bundle of stolen goods in one hand, while with the other he brandished the knife; and as his dark features wrought with rage, he said and swore he would have Larry's

life, if he attempted to take him. The latter told him he must return with him to the store, and firmly grasped the stake. The robber consented. This he did to throw Lawrence off his guard, that he might either close on him or run away; but it was evident he could do neither without encountering the point or the weight of the weapon in his antagonist's powerful hand. Often he threw a tiger look at Larry; but found himself measured with a steady eye. Thus they walked for a furlong or so; and Larry began to feel himself in a fearful predicament. He saw a deadly weapon in the hand of a murderous villain, who might double round a tree and escape his unwieldy weapon and give a deadly stab. The robber stood still, near a tree, and said—"Now, Struilby, you'r only latety come here, and you don't know the run. Why didn't that cowardly cove come with you to catch me? If *he* had . . .; but by —— I'll not pass this spot till you kill me or I'll kill you, if you don't let me go." So saying he threw down the bundle and said—"There, take that and I'll owe him nothing; but if you don't you know what's for it." So saying he grasped his knife and fixed his eye on Struilby. More in mortification at the mean way in which Lock had deserted him, than in dread of the robber, he said—"Perkins, be off, I'll take the bundle;" and as the other disappeared he sullenly picked up the bundle and took it to the store, to the delight of Lock, who was surprised

at his own want of thought in not reflecting that the robber might be armed, and at his not bidding Lawrence take arms or help. Lawrence upbraided him with not fulfilling his promise to come to his help; but soft answers turned away his wrath, and he retired ashamed at his own rashness, and resolved to learn a lesson from the coolness of his friend. He did feel, however, that there was an ever-present Friend who saved him from falling a victim to what he ever after regarded as the selfishness of one heart and the temerity of another. His nature was too buoyant and open long to retain the deep sense of injuries; and, as Lock appeared dejected next day and anxious to show kindness, Larry soon was as open and confiding as ever. Had Lock been aware of the value of all the convict carried away, he would have been much more active for his capture. While he had gone from his desk to another room, to get some article for the convict, the latter had glided round and opened his desk and abstracted a £50 check. Of this Lock knew nothing, till some days afterwards he was summoned to Bathurst to identify the man who had been arrested on suspicion, when he had presented it to be cashed. There he found his old servant, who had been so near adding murder to theft on leaving the station; and he had the double gratification of recovering the money and giving "seven years more" to the thief.

CHAPTER VI.

"ODDS AND ENDS"—BAROO STATION—THE LUCKY GEM-FINDER—LOCK'S PURCHASE—STRUILBY'S ENCOUNTERS—YOUNG ASH ARRIVES—BLACKS' CAMP—EAGLE-HAWK NIMAGAULEY—HIS SON DICK—NATIVE PRACTICAL JOKES AND WIT.

My dear J—,

You ask me to give you "as graphically as I can, some *odds* and *ends* of bush-life, when it was newest to me at my first station, Baroo Narang, on the Bathurst Plains." There is no place on earth I now hate so much as Bathurst, for reasons I shall perhaps tell you again. In the colony it is sometimes called "the City of the Plains." Socially and morally it deserves the name; for, in many respects, it was as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah; and I saw the day I could have wished it under another dead sea. Thank God, however, that bad wish did not last long. But I must say the two years I spent on Baroo Station, in the employment of Ash and Alder, though somewhat listless years, were on the whole happy, and had some red-letter days. I was on the best of terms with my employers, and with government servants—in fact

with whites, blacks, and myself. I was much on horseback, had the appetite of a wolf, and more mutton than any moderate wolf could eat. My health then, as ever, was excellent; and though I drank only tea and water, my spirits were like champagne. I did not then know the value of money. In fact, I was long in learning that;—a lesson even fools must learn in the colony. But I must come to your request for "odds," and then try to get the "ends."

Well, it seemed "*odd*" that our longest winter's day was in June, and our midsummer in December; so that I saw birds fall dead from the trees with sun-stroke on Christmas day. It seemed odd that this country would give *two* crops in the year, and our own Eden of Erin give only one; and that beggars and miscreants at home became grandees and flock-owners here. It was *odd* that our trees would shed their bark and not their leaves; and would grow so large that the branches of one would stretch over a rood of ground, and its hollow trunk be so large that I have driven a horse and waggon (I speak literal truth) along a road-way through it, while it still stood and grew like a hollow tower. It was *odd* that the rabbits (opossums) would burrow through the trees and not in the ground. It was odd that water was so scarce as to be the one thing needful, instead of being the one thing shunned; so that you could lie out for weeks,

wrapt at night in your opossum rug, with your saddle for your pillow, and look up at the great bright stars, without fear of dew or rain. How odd compared with Ireland? It was *odd* that the hot winds came from the north and the cold ones from the south; and that you could have piles of melons and pumpkins growing in your garden as common as turnips at home. It was *odd* that the bees had no stings and the flies had sharp ones. It was *odd* to look out on a boundless pasture of bluish-brown hue, where the sheep raised clouds of dust as they moved. It was *odd* for an Irishman seldom to see potatoes, except sweet ones, and to find fresh meat as plenty as when the Israelites got too much of it in the wilderness. It was *odd* for the first year, to have nothing but bush-yarns with black and white savages, instead of meeting and conversing with Christian neighbours, as I used to do. It was an *odd* thing that when Jerrold Lock, in a fit of zeal for God and anger at the Devil, held a meeting, I sung as clerk and he preached as parson; and that the hardened white sinners laughed at us both; and that the blacks acted over our meeting in uproarious pantomime for days, and called it—"Cobon stupid corrobbora, that one make it white fellow—that make it shaw—bow—now—yal—yal—yallujah—Amen!" It was very sad, however, that we did not persevere, and back up precept by example; and be "the salt

of the earth," where mind and heart were corrupting all around. It was *odd* such an acute parson could not solve the old riddle of uniting the service of mammon with that of God; and that the clerk did not reflect that he was too merry out of the desk to be very edifying in it. It was odd we did not see this, but laid the blame on man's wickedness in general, rather than our own in particular. But where will not this chapter of "odds" carry me? It seemed *odd* and *sad* that my best friends and I should have some sixteen thousand miles of sea and land between them and me; and that at opposite sides of the globe we should be standing erect, with feet against feet, spinning through space. Sometimes when my heart grew soft about home, it was *odd* to think I had ever left it; and to feel the tear steal down in the silent bush. Was it distance lent enchantment to the view? Certainly, home seemed radiant with poetry and beauty it had not when I was there and used to sigh for the wide world. I was always too ideal; and was partly kept from marrying that rosy, stately, industrious girl, our third cousin, "Jane of the Park," because when I admired wild flowers she laughed at me, and thought the principal use of buttercups and daisies was to colour butter and cheese. Amid the grinning grub-eating gins of Baroo I thought of her, as of a form of queenly refinement. I thought it *odd* I did not marry her

and settle down on a patch of the "green sod." It was really *odd* now how the sight of an ordinary white woman, not to say lady, awoke feelings of romantic admiration, as if she moved in all the lines and hues of beauty. But it was *odd* one saw such a sight so seldom, except when one went forty miles to church in Bathurst, where the sights were to me, alas, as interesting as the sermons. But it is odd I am not coming to the end of these oddnesses.

Well, my dear J—, to be more historic and minute about Baroo. The station was formed many years ago by an old government man, who had been assigned to "old Iron Bark Lawson." His name was Davy Mc.A—. He was Mr. Lawson's shepherd; and a right trusty one was he. One morning as Davy was going by sunrise to look after sheep, he saw something blazing on the ground about a hundred yards off. He thought it a live coal some one had dropt. But who should drop it there? and, lo! why does it get brighter and not smoke? Davy lifted a precious stone—I think a ruby—of almost fabulous worth. He showed it to Mr. Lawson, who took it to a jeweller in Sydney. Report has it that Mr. L. said—"Davy, I'll keep that thing you found; and on the day you're free, I'll give you a hundred maiden ewes, fifty three-year old heifers, and a brood mare." Davy fell on his knees overpowered, and thanked

his benefactor. His "ignorance was bliss;" for, had he known the value of his gem, he would probably have melted it in rum less delicately than Cleopatra did her pearl. Mr. L. kept his word, and set Davy up on Baroo Narang—which he found and formed for himself—as a free man. He lived a wizened old bachelor, and died an old miser; and friends, he never acknowledged, divided his spoils. A Sydney lawyer was the flesher that quartered the carcase of the miser's fortune for the young eagles, who gathered to the spoil at Baroo. Ash and Alder heard of the intended sale; and they engaged Lock to survey the stock and station—huts, yards, and all—and buy all, if possible, by private contract. There was no man in the colony could do this better than Lock. He came it over lawyer and all; and bought the concern three hundred pounds, I should say, under its real value. When Ash saw the purchase and papers he could hardly believe his eyes; and, in gratitude and self-interest, took Lock into partnership, giving him legal security of drawing *one-fifth of all*—principal and profits—on dissolution of partnership. Lock was meek as Moses till he got the deed of partnership executed; but Ash and Alder quickly found his keen edge was double. He soon rode as good a horse, and held as high a head, as either of themselves. Indeed as they were seldom ever there he was chief man. They kept the station to make

money, and not as a residence. When I came, I was so soft as to get no written agreement from Lock; but, at his advice, left it to my employers to judge what I was worth; and bent all my attention to acquire colonial experience in the management of sheep and cattle. Lock was storekeeper; and I took a turn at all work, rough and smooth. In less than a year after my arrival young James Ash, nephew of my employer, arrived at the station, fresh from Liverpool. He had heard much from his relative, and had read much in books, of the colony. He came to take his uncle's place at the station; but he soon found his master in Jerrold Lock. I saw him blaze in anger one day when he went into the store to Lock to ask the check book, to draw a check for a small sum. Lock refused point blank; and told him he must keep his place. I wondered at Lock's studiedly offensive bearing to him, as I knew it would reach his uncle; but I subsequently learned that Lock had "a *plan*" to work. That plan was to irritate them into dissolution of partnership as soon as possible, that he might *draw his fifth of all*, and set up for himself. This plan ripened in about two years after I came to the station; and it laid the basis of Lock's rapid fortune. Let me not, however, anticipate "the *ends*."

In proportion as young Ash disliked Lock, he appeared to take to me. He hated "a lock" that,

he said, old Nicholas could not open, except he borrowed Mammon's key. (He was an honest fellow, and please forgive his pun.) I told you how Lock got me into the affair with the convict that took to the bush. Before young Ash came to the station he got me into another affair, that brought me into a court of justice for the first time in my life. He got on very bad terms with a great grisly blacksmith, who lived some three miles off, on the neighbouring station of Baroo Cobon. (Cobon meaning great, as Narang means little.) Lock wanted some coulters sharpened, and sent them by a third party to him to have them done. He did them; but, when he knew they belonged to Lock, he pitched them into a water-hole before his door. This was a splendid nut of law for Lock to crack. He got the smith fined in some pounds for damages and costs. One day as Lock and I were out on the sheep-run near the creek, up came the blacksmith, black-guarding Lock and challenging him to fight. He showered volleys of abuse on him as quick and hot as sparks at white-heat from the anvil. Lock shut his lips and walked on in sublime—but as I thought cowardly—indifference; he not forgetting, I suppose, what material I was made of. At last I bade the blacksmith shut up. He squared his fist at Lock's nose, and finally at mine. I drew back and dealt him a full-swing left-hander, that gave him a refreshing cold bath in the creek. He sum-

moned me for assault; but Lock handled the book so well as witness, that the smith was again fined damages and costs. Lock often, when in good humour, laughed at the affair; but, though my vanity was flattered my pride was mortified, and I sent a message of regret to the smith for what had occurred. He said—"He bore me no ill-will whatever; but he had it in for that black-mouthed coward, whose teeth were rotten with telling and swearing lies." Shortly after James Ash came to the station I nearly fell into another similar scrape. The overseer of Major Birchfield, the proprietor of Baroo Cobon, was a famous sheep-scabber and foot-rot curer. He was a great Scotch highlander, and had a temper as fiery as his head was red. He had been lagged, I think, for deer-shooting on improper occasions. He had communicated to Lock his secret of sheep-doctoring, for a sum which was to be paid, if the cure was effectual. Lock affirmed it was not, and he that it was. One morning when I came in from the stock-yard, I found quite a row at the store. There stood Mc.Gregor cursing Lock for a smooth-faced liar, because he would not pay. Young Ash stood looking on, hoping, I think, that the great knuckles of the highlander would come down like flails on Lock, and dust his jacket. Lock was cowering back; and, I think, would have used some awkward weapon, if all had gone to all. He brightened up when he saw me;

and with his hands in his pockets coolly advanced and said—"Do you think I'll pay three pounds for three half-pence worth of sulphur and grease?" Mc.Gregor stamped and swore, and threw off coat and waistcoat. He challenged Lock to fight. Lock looked half-perplexed, half-contemptuous. Mc.Gregor was a coward at heart, I guess, he boasted so much; and, when Lock would not fight, he challenged any man at the station, and looked hard at young Ash. The young Englishman's blood was rising; but he was not ten stone weight, and Mc.Gregor was fourteen. There was dead weight against him. I saw what it must come to. I was over twelve stone weight, with more shoulder than the Scotchman. I kept my temper, but peeled off jerken and waistcoat. "Now," I said, "Mc.Gregor, you have no second, and I'll have none. We'll settle it between us." He looked in my face with apparent amazement and curiosity; and went and —and—put on his clothes as calmly as any other morning that week! He left the station; but the language of Burns could not afford him curses hard enough for Jerrold Lock. Indeed his rage and mortified pride appeared to half choke his utterance. From that hour, however, I evidently rose cent per cent with James Ash. But it really did not raise me in my own estimation. I saw myself deficient in self-control. Though I did not envy Lock the selfish coolness that could irritate

others, and then the selfish caution that could save his own skin. With all Lock's accomplishments and my own defects, I am not sure I should wish to exchange with him in these respects.

But I'm reeling it off too heavy about myself; let me "end" the day with a practical joke of Dick Nimagauley, the black. Ash, as I said, took greatly to me after the Mc.Gregor row. He came to me, on the evening of that day, and asked me to take him to the nearest camp of blacks, to get material for an opossum-rug of real native manufacture. He, also, wanted to get, if he could, a water-mole, a flying squirrel, and some native birds for stuffing, as well as a case of Australian insects to send to England. Off we started for the camp on the creek. King Bogan was away at a distance on the grounds of the tribe; and old Eagle-Hawk Nimagauley was head of the little clan, whose sit-down was next us. Old Eagle-Hawk was a splendid specimen of a black. He had been a foremost warrior and a terrible enemy to the early colonists, and had taken many lives. He had eaten share of more than one white man, it was said; and had many a narrow escape from the white man's hemp, lead, and steel. He was esteemed a warrior-patriarch among his people. He stood in height some six feet—just two inches below the king. As we approached his camp his dogs poured out in a growling stream, and his gins with their

pickaninnies scampered in; for he had five gins, and at least eighteen dogs; the number of gins and dogs being the badge of wealth and rank among blacks. Old Nimagauley advanced and saluted me in English style. He was not a begging black; and really looked like a natural patriarch or prince, though black as ebony and shining with grease. Young Ash was struck, and looked on him with evident admiration. No wonder, for there was something grand in the "old Eagle." His head was quite bushy with hair; and his beard swept down his breast; and both were quite hoary. His chest was so prominent that a spear could lie across his breasts, as he stood erect. Thick wales or cords of callous flesh marked his bust, where it had been cut and gummed till he appeared corded from the breast-bone all along the ribs. This is one of the most distinguishing marks of manhood. His fillet-bound forehead though receding was broad, his brows heavy, his eyes deep-set, restless, and expressive of great sharpness and fire. His mouth was large, with powerful under jaw; but his lips not very thick for a black. His whole frame was muscular and symmetrical, though somewhat corpulent, and having lost much of the vigour of youth. I told him who Mr. Ash was, and what were his wishes. When he heard we wanted opossum and kangaroo, he looked a little fierce, as if old hostilities were awakened. "Ay, ay, you come yallock yarraman

over mine toolas—you yan along mine sit-down, pater mine weeli—white man tink tuck me, shoot me, if I pater white fellow jumbuck or gin-bullock. White fellows full, full, come along caleen, want more, more. Ah! ha! all fair, I b'lieve. Mine Dick piala you for weeli."

I interpreted to Ash. "Yes, yes, you white men gallop horses over my fathers' graves—you white men come on my hunting-grounds, and eat my opossums; but if I eat the white man's sheep or heifer, he'll hang me or shoot me. You're full, full, but come over the sea, and want more, more. But, ha! ha! it's all right, I suppose. My Dick will talk to you about opossums."

Dick was in the young men's camp at some distance; for, until they get a wife, they dare not enter the camp of the married people; and if they met a gin on the way, they must turn aside, otherwise club or spear would teach them bachelor-like propriety. A little protuberant-bellied pickaninny soon brought Dick, and another young man. Dick was above twenty years old, the son of old Eagle-Hawk by his favourite wife. Dick was the worthy son of his sire in form and temperament, but a little less prejudiced against the whites than his father. He was one of the most athletic, one of the best-made young men I ever saw, giving you, perhaps, more idea of agility than strength. No drill-sergeant could have made him walk with more erect soldier-

like bearing; for he was not hampered by braces or clogs or such like; and no dancing-master could have taught him a lighter or more graceful step. Save a few rags of kangaroo skin fore and aft, he was in his naked spars, in nature's unencumbered freedom. He resembled his father, whom he treated with reverence; but, when he looked at us, and heard our wishes, there was a twinkle of roguish delight and drollery in his dark almond-shaped eyes. His cousin, Joey Colwah, who was with him, was heavier-limbed, and heavier-headed, and heavier-eyed—a dozy-looking black. I think they called him Colwah from the drowsy lizard of that name. Dick jabbered a bit to him, and he trotted off to the camp; he soon returned, however, with some of Dick's hunting weapons. Then Dick headed off towards a distant knoll of gum trees. As we proceeded a lot of little woolly-headed urchins—who saw Dick starting for the chase, and wished to bespeak game—started with us jabbering and running, till we came to a long pool in the creek. We turned the end of it; but they took to the water like ducklings—Dick and all. Ash stood to see the sport, not knowing whether to laugh or not; for suddenly the pickaninnies disappeared, as if they had sunk to the bottom; but it was only to re-appear in a minute, giggling and shouting, and cutting all sorts of aquatic capers. As they saw us amused they con-

tinued the sport, ducking and diving, and re-appearing where you least expected them; and then making the woods ring with shouts and laughter. Ash laughed as heartily as they, and pronounced them a generation of otters and seals. Dick beckoned them home, and home they went as merry as the young of any of human kind. We came to a great old blue gum, ragged and decayed. Its leaden-coloured foliage was miserably out of proportion to its size. Dick examined it with critical care, and said—"Weeli, I believe, sit down up there." He drew his tomahawk from his belt and cut a notch in the bark, some three feet from the ground. Into this he inserted his great toe; and truly a black has a *great* toe. It is great by hereditary transmission, and personal acquisition. He can stand on that toe in the notch, as erect as a dragoon in both stirrups. He cut another notch some four feet higher, and thus notch over notch for hand and toe, he turns the tree into a ladder, while Ash wonders and looks on. I should say that Dick, like every well-dressed black, wore a band around his head. In this, above his ear, he wore a little stick with a hook on it, like a lady's crochet needle. This band, like the tomahawk belt or sash, wrapped three or four times round his body, was spun by his mother from opossum hair, and woven beautifully into light tough cloth. In these he carries the weapons of

war and the chase. Before he ascended the tree, I should say, he took up three or four little pebbles in his mouth, which Ash thought a mere heathen superstition for good luck. When he got on a large limb of the tree, he took out his searching-stick from above his ear, and thrust it into a hole in the branch, and turning it round found a hair on the little hook at the end of it. Then taking a pebble out of his mouth he let it fall gently down the cavity and listened. He crept downward, and knowing the spot where it ceased to sound, he dug right in over the opossum, which sleeps fast by day, and leg by leg drawing it out, he knocked its head against the tree and threw it down to his gaping cousin, Colwah. Ash looked on with exclamations of admiration and delight. "Struilby, is *not* that splendid? that savage could live where you and I should starve. All nature is that chap's paddock and larder. No wonder they should say—'When wild in woods the noble savage ran!' Beautiful, beautiful! See how he is tapping that horizontal branch with his tomahawk. The pebble won't sound it. Well done, Dick! that is the third out of one tree. We'll soon get the rug, and you the backy!" Just then, as Dick was winding out an old, rank, long-clawed, buck opossum, Ash went under the branch to look. This was too good an opportunity for a practical joke. Dick slightly struck the old fellow's head against

the tree, so as merely to stun him—for he knew his tendency to feign death—and then let him fall plump down on Ash's head. Like an enraged cat, the opossum stuck his claws into Ash's head and neck, and he danced about crying—"Struilby! the —— is tearing me to pieces!" The two blacks made the wood ring with laughter. Dick leant against the tree and shook with such laughs as only a black can give. I fear I followed his example too closely. At length, after Ash had stamped and tore—which made the old tormentor cling the closer—he stood still. My attempts to help him only made matters worse. Dick saw this, and letting himself down from the tree unclasped the opossum's claws, and held it by the back of the neck. He looked most meek and sorrowful, barring the twinkle of his eyes. He struck his forehead, and penitently said—"Stupid cobra (head) mine! ogle eye mine! What for throw it *there?* What for not throw it THERE? I been all mistake. What for let it fall on new chum's head?" He let the opossum go; and when it had run about forty yards, and appeared all but gone, he poised himself for a cast, and launching his tomahawk struck the old fellow on the back of the head, and tumbled him over. Ash soon recovered his composure, and laughed at the joke; but Dick maintained his humorous gravity and penitence. As we returned "the settlers' clock"—for it was six

o'clock in the evening—was uttering its uproarious whistling, shouting, laughing, braying, announcement of the hour. Ash, making a patronising effort to speak Dick's lingo, said—"What you name it that bird?" Dick looked wondrously grave and inquisitive. "Ay, ay, that bird brother belonging to you, I b'lieve. That—that—that—LAUGHING JACKASS." Ash laughed and said—"Dick, I want that bird." The blacks, as a general rule, do not kill these birds, they are such admirable destroyers of whip-snakes and small serpents; but Dick was in a humour to oblige, and be admired. So beckoning to us to stand still, he got the tree on which the bird was perched between him and it; and, advancing to within about twenty yards, he suddenly stept aside; and, as the bird was rising to fly, he let fly his waddy—or little ball-headed club—and knocked master jackass senseless on the ground. "*You* yabber no more to *your* friends," he said, as he picked it up for Ash. Just then, half-a-dozen that had been silent broke out into loud ha, ha, has; and went braying through the trees. Looking at both Ash and me knowingly, he said—"All 'em brothers and gins belonging to you come out here, I b'lieve." This enabled both of us to laugh on an equality, and we both pronounced Dick as clever in wit as in the chase.

From that day forth he was a prime favourite with Ash, who said he could respect him more

than half the white men he knew. And, in testimony of this respect, he often made so free to the tobacco roll that, sometimes as you passed the blacks' camp of an evening, you might see old Nimagauley, his five gins, and all his pickaninnies blowing a cloud that Germans might envy. Lock complained that "tobacco did not pay" at the station; but old Nimagauley by fuming grew less fretful, and in better temper with the white usurpers of his hereditary domain.

Ash said that, as we came to the natives without being sent for, king Bogan was the rightful sovereign of Baroo, and Eagle-Hawk our landlord and squire; and he thought an occasional roll of tobacco, with a damper and some trinkets, a very low rent to my lord and ladies. As to a sheep found mysteriously dead or killed, he did not grudge it as a cheap purchase of good neighbourhood. Head, pluck, and offal of all cattle slaughtered were the regular perquisite and feast of the natives, and the dogs. Nabal, he said, did not gain much by his churlish refusal of rations to a chief, who had no such claim on him as Eagle-Hawk Nimagauley had on us. Though sceptical on some points, he thought the rule of doing as we would be done by a golden rule everywhere, whether among blacks or whites.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SQUATTER-NATURALIST—SPLITTING AND FENCING —CHASTE CONVERSATION TOWARDS NATIVE WOMEN —REPRISALS ON THE OPPOSITE—INSECTS—SERPENT-BITE—CUPPED BY EAGLE-HAWK—HUMOROUS MISTAKE.

Young Ash and I, as I said, took greatly to each other. He had studied medicine and knew much of natural history. I always, as you know, had curiosity about natural objects; but principally about those that afforded sport in hunting. Ash went far below me in this, down nature's chain to centipedes, tarantulas, beetles, ants, and the links of life that taper off into the invisible. He knew the names of most living things, and had books to read them up. At that time Pope's translation of Homer, or a novel of Sir Walter Scott, were, beside my Bible, most of my reading. He whetted my observation, I think, and did me mental good, for he was a well-informed young man. Often, on the run, when we had a pot of tea after salt beef and damper, and a good long smoke after that, we would give our horses a spell, and we would have yarns about England, Ireland, birds, beasts,

fishes, insects, sweethearts, religion, or whatever turned up.

We wanted a paddock enclosed near the huts for some milch cows; and, as men were scarce, I set to sawing and splitting and fencing, and doing as much as I could; young Ash thought, as much as any two men on the station could do. He came and wrought with me of his own accord; and as even Lock thought we had earned a holiday, by some eight days' hard work, Ash and I resolved to take a day's hunting when we had done. We signified our purpose to old Eagle-Hawk, and wished for Dick and Colwah to accompany us. By the way, Ash had such an interest in the blacks that I warned him against going too often where the gins were; for as their morality was often very lax, and their rightful lords dreadfully jealous-minded, and public opinion on the station coarse and loud-mouthed, I thought it would be for the safety of my young friend's skin and fame, if not for his morals also, for him to keep away from the vicinity of the coloured beauties, who delighted to coquet with white men who had tobacco or trinkets. It is sad to say, but it is very true, that most of the murders of whites that occur may be traced to the undue liberties they take with black women; for while the poor degraded native will sometimes propose to the white man to take one of his gins or female relatives on hire, he will stab

to the heart the man that takes her without leave. I knew the case of two bullock-drivers that came with stores to a hut in the bush, and who took a black woman by force and kept her all night. Next day they left with their dray, and the blacks came down on the hut and pierced through the innocent hut-keeper with jagged spears, till they left him bristled like a porcupine. He was a poor man with but one leg, and was absent when the gin was detained, but he was the first victim they could find. Sometimes yellow children were born in the camp, but I believe were always killed and eaten. I never saw the slightest impropriety in Ash; but he thanked me for what he saw needful advice; and in future when he went to the blacks' camp, it was to that of the young men. But to return to the finishing of our fence.

During the work he caught some curious specimens of phasmas or leaf-insects, three or four inches long, with wings like leaves, and several species of beetles, and pinned them to bark. He ascended a gum tree to capture an unusually large leaf-insect, and in the act of doing so disturbed and trod on a snake which was coiled up in the fork, and probably was capturing insects for different purposes. The first notice of its presence he had was feeling a coil of it round his leg, and its fangs fastened in his calf. He gave a shout, and it glided or fell on the ground; and with a stroke of the axe I divided

it into two parts, which went about wriggling as vigorously as if each intended to set up on its own hook—as the Yankees say. Ash came down rather pale, and with his leg smarting. When we looked at the wound there were punctures by both fangs, and inflammation was setting in around them. We did not then know the character of the snake, but feared it was venomous. I sucked the wound to extract the poison; but, fortunately, while I was doing so old Eagle-Hawk and Dick, and a gin who carried some game behind them, hove in sight. We called them to us and informed them of the affair. Hawky asked to see the snake, and when he saw its black tail and head, shook his head and told Dick to gather certain leaves from a tree at some distance. He stooped down and sucked the wound with a power of suction that brought blood freely and made Ash to wince. He declared it was equal to scarification and cupping. The pounded leaves were applied and bound-to with a strip of stringy bark; and all proved right. The snake was a most deadly one, a black snake four feet long, and old Eagle-Hawk, as his medical fee, got it to roast; for blacks will eat all snakes as we do eels, except the death-adder, and one or two other equally venomous ones. We then made an appointment with the old Hawk for a day's hunting. He had seen tracks of kangaroo that day, some two miles beyond the Bridge Cave, and

intended to muster for a hunt next morning. Dick's quick eye caught sight of the insects that Ash had pinned to the bits of dry bark; and, pointing to them, he said—"Ay, ay; white fellows turning black—white fellows pater (eat) them?" We could hardly persuade him that we were not insectivorous animals. "Then," he said, "piala me (tell me) what for spear um like it that?" Ash said, "For a museum." Dick roared and laughed, and old Eagle-Hawk shook. Dick took up the piece of bark with the insects, and putting it under his arm began to work up and down with his elbow, and twisting his mouth and turning his eyes began to scream and chant like wild Scotch pipes. He capered about and turned the tune of "Royal Charlie," till he had us wondering whether he were daft, or how he caught the air. I need not say we were amused to find that he thought *museum* meant *music;* and that his idea of "white-man-music" had been caught from a Scotch shepherd playing the bagpipes. A favourite joke with Dick afterwards was to punish the pickaninnies by laying them on their faces on pieces of bark, and threatening to pin them with his spear, and to send them to a "musim" over the sea, as black beetles, to be seen by white pickaninnies for "trepim-y-hepenny."

CHAPTER VIII.

A DAY'S SPORT WITH THE NATIVES—OFF TO THE MEET—NATIVE USE OF A WATCH—THE WAMMERAH AND THE FOWLING-PIECE — DICK'S PRECISION WITH THE SPEAR—DOME CAVE—CAVE SHOOTING — STALACTITES — WATER FOWL — BRIDGE CAVE—WOMBAT-TRAP—A LIVE CAPTURE OF WOMBAT AND WATER-MOLE—THE HUNTERS—THE BATTUE—THE BANQUET—POST-PRANDIAL SPORTS.

Next morning by early dawn we were up and off with Dick and Colwah, to take the caves on our way to "the meet," which lay beyond the end of the creek. Dick had something shiny hanging by a twisted thong of kangaroo hide from his neck. It was the outer case of a silver watch, and the balance wheel. He prized them much; but how did he come by them? Did the savage, by some dark deed of murder, take them from the white man? Not at all; their history was much more comic than tragic. A gentleman squatter had taken a native from the Wellington plains—plains not very far from us—to Sydney and thence to England. There the black was lionized, clothed, and made a gentleman, with a watch in his fob. He bore the

fetters of civilization, while among the civilized; but, sometime after his return, he pitched off encumbrances, broke the case of his watch, and cutting the works with his tomahawk into four parts, a portion has fallen by barter into the hands of the heir-apparent of the Eagle-Hawk, who has more faith in the settlers'—more properly the natives' —clock—more faith I mean in his friend the laughing jackass—than in English or Genevese chronometers. It will take considerably quicker progress than they are now making to set up among the Macquarie blacks a paying emporium of such wares. The voices of the forest, and the shadows of the trees, tell them the hour for all needful purpose; and they find time but a cheap and dull commodity, which they are glad to laugh through, or doze through, or kill in any easy way. But now we are approaching that part of the creek where game most abounds; and if Dick cannot understand a museum, or a watch, he has arts and sciences of his own, transmitted by generations of ancestors, who have inhabited this continent for—how long? Ash says for countless millenniums before Adam. But Ash has lax ideas of chronology and other more important ologies.

The miall and boree trees (male and female of the same species) grow plentifully around here. The miall yields most beautifully grained ornamental wood; which, from its scent, is called violet wood.

The boree grows something like a weeping-willow, and about the same size. Horses browse on it, and grow mud-fat. Cattle, also, eat it. In spring it is covered with strings of blossoms like the laburnum, only greener; now with ripened peas.

One of these trees grew in our way on the creek. It was then covered thickly with hundreds of birds —ground pigeons, wonga-wongas and cockatoos. "A capital shot," said Ash. "Now, Dick, you throw your wammerah and raise them, and we'll shoot when they rise." We were full a hundred yards from the tree. Dick threw his best throw; and, as the birds rose, we fired four barrels with number four. In all we brought down some sixteen, and some three of them were the victims of the wammerah. Soon after Dick made it ricochet among pigeons feeding on the ground, and bagged twice as many. When we came to the creek, a water wag-tail was perched on a high reed, and Dick said—"I b'lieve mine spear him." Ash thought it impossible. I was more credulous. Dick drew out his woomerah, or throwing-stick, a straight stick about four feet long, with a socket turned up on the end to hold the knob of the light spear. It acts as a second arm or sling. Dick adjusted a slender grass-tree spear, and slung it at about thirty yards off, and pierced the bird through. Ash declared there was not a rifleman among his Majesty's sharp-shooters could beat that, or bring

down master Motacilla Yarellii with so little noise or loss of ammunition.

Ash had never been in "the caves," though I had more than once; so I prepared myself to enjoy duck-shooting at the entrance, and his admiration through the interior. These caves are found on the Baroo Narang creek, between the Macquarie and Turon rivers. The creek is dry in summer, except a chain of "billibongs," as the natives say, or water-holes, as we phrase them. In winter it overflows from the rains, and the surplus waters of the rivers I have mentioned. The surrounding formation here is limestone. The first we enter is the "Dome Cave." The entrance is an arch of not more than twelve feet high, but the first stalactite apartment is a dome between forty to sixty feet high and ninety wide. There is a little lake of pure water in it, which is fed by a stream we shall hear purling under the stalagmite floor, and afterwards issuing forth into the creek. A warragal bitch and her whelps, and a duck and her eggs, were found petrified in this cave, and box-tree wood also, of which some of the shepherds made ornaments like those of Irish bog oak. As we entered a cloud of wild ducks flew out, or rather would have done so, but that we met them with four barrels, and brought down over two dozen. It was a murderous volley on closed ranks, and the column doubled back on itself into the dome. While we charged

our pieces some attempted to escape, and Dick, with his ten-foot long currywang spear, skewered a couple more. We felt remorse at wasting life needlessly, and did not fire again. Poor Colwah groaned under his burden of game, with which we determined to send him back to the huts by-and-by, as a pleasant variety to salt pork and mutton. The cave delighted Ash. Apartment opened on apartment till it grew dark, and we had to strike lights; and then the first gleam showed stalactite columns in various fantastic forms. Here they represented an open work of columns, like the screen that shuts off the choir in a cathedral. There, a pulpit and preacher in flowing white surplice; there, a silent congregation all in stone and in the dark, except for this gleam. Ash made some severe remarks on petrified ecclesiastics, and sermons in the dark, and hearers with hearts of stone. These remarks I attribute to his education in the dissecting-room, where he had so much to do with bodies, and so little with souls. But I tell him he ought to have observed that there was a great difference between the body, when the soul was in it, and when it was gone from it—"returned to God who gave it." But surely these wondrous caves, and the minds that admire them, must have had a great and good Author—blessed be his name! Dick does not admire the dark parts of the cave; and Colwah won't enter. The latter trembles lest

—"Devil-Devil jump up;" and the dashing Dick has a dread of the same, but he imitates our assurance, and fears our laugh. When we, to hear the echoes, fired a blank shot, and sang or shouted, Colwah fled to safe distance. How is it that all men naturally dread darkness and invisible power? Does it not at once prove man's spiritual nature, and that his spirit is consciously guilty and fallen?

In going along the creek to the Bridge Cave we shot several brace of teal. In this same place ere now, concealed in the sheep hurdles, I have brought down four brace at a crack. There are black ducks that build in the long reeds, and in stumps of trees all along; and but for the snakes one might get nests full of eggs. There also abounds here a kind of duck that builds and hatches in *high* trees in the wood. The mystery is how they get their young to the water. Dick and Colwah affirm that they have seen them carry the downy ducklings, one by one, in their bills to the creek, "where their pickaninnies learn to swim." "Well done again, old mother *nature*," cries my friend. I take the liberty to quote a book which says—"In wisdom hast thou made them all." Surely, surely, it *is* reasonable and happy to believe in the care of Him—"Whose tender mercies are over all his works;" and who has not forgotten the commissariat of these poor children of his—these blacks. The young duck, leaving its dark life in the shell,

bursts into a wider one, through sun and sky, and forest and pool. May not some such thing await Colwah and Dick and *ourselves!* "*Perhaps* so," says Ash. Again I quote the book—"Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel."

The Bridge Cave is under a natural bridge thrown across the hills where they narrow up, at the end of the creek. Over this bridge of some hundred feet in extent, there is a cattle track; and, strange to say, there rises on it a beautiful spring of water. It soaks down from the hills, I suppose, till it forms a reservoir in the hard limestone, that only lets as much into the cave as forms the phantastic stalactites below. We entered and explored the varied and spacious apartments—a palatial suite of rooms built in silence and long since. Just as we were half way through, and saw daylight on the other side, Dick's eye caught some object. He beckoned us to be silent and stand still. He crawled over as silently as a snake, and then laughed aloud and called us. There was a large wombat innocently taken in a simple stone-trap set for it by the natives. It is the Australian representative of our badger;—a harmless creature, plump and fat, and delicious as sucking-pig, when stewed in its skin by the natives. I had seen native hunters smoke it out of its burrow, and, waiting for it at the exit, drop

their tomahawk into its skull, and with a turn pull it out. Here was one alive, and which Ash wished to keep alive to see, as he said, how it would behave in civilized life. Otherwise Dick would have had it for lunch. He turned it over on its back as unresisting as a sheep. But, behold, when turned over there was not one wombat, but two; for a little head protruded from the abdominal pouch. Dick laughed aloud, and looked at Colwah—"Ha, ha, all right, buggerie gin-wombach! Gin with pickaninny belonging to Colwah at last, cobon like it you." As poor Colwah had never had luck in getting a sweetheart, he thought here was one for him at last, with a pickaninny like Colwah. This joke had its piquancy from facts of private history, not flattering to poor Colwah. Dick laid it on its back along his arm, and it was perfectly quiet, except when anything approached its pouch. When we got out he set it on its feet, and it made to run away; but he headed it back, and after some turns it was tame enough to lead or drive on a kangaroo hide rope. It was given in charge to Colwah to be taken to the huts. Only once when approached behind, in maternal care for its young, it snapped with its sharp-cutting teeth at its keeper; which gave Dick room to remark on Colwah's ill-temper in vexing his gin. I may say that Ash was quite delighted with his "phascolomys wombat." It was about

twenty-seven pounds weight, generally of light brown colour, except over the rump, where it was dark. It was about two feet and a half long, with short legs, short ears, sharp eyes, stumpy tail, and rat-like mouth, with hair an inch and a half long, somewhat longer, however, behind. A creature admirably adapted by its feet and form, for burrowing, and by its teeth to live on the coarse grass.

We seated ourselves on the bank of the creek, and boiled a pot of tea, and smoked,—blacks and whites equally enjoying lunch after a ramble of some five hours. Indeed if the quantity stowed away be the guage of gastronomic enjoyment, Colwah exceeded us all. "Gin-bullock and tong ong, tea and suga bag"—*i. e.*, beef and damper, tea and sugar were luxuries too great for savage self-control; and Colwah's "stomachic region grew markedly protuberant," as Ash observed. Dick, too, grew rather fusiform. It is perfectly astonishing how much a black can eat, and how long he can do without food or water afterwards. This is very much a matter of accommodation and elasticity acquired by practice. I would be afraid to describe to you how far I once could demolish a leg of mutton myself; and after one meal do without another for two days.

Dick's restless eye was ever ranging on all sides, even while smoking and chaffing. Suddenly he laid down his pipe and started, beckoning silence.

"What's up now with Dick?" said Ash, while the black crossed the creek and crept under the dry bank down to the edge of a water-hole. Suddenly he rose and cast his spear at something in the shadow of a wrinkle in the bank. It rolled over, and Dick appeared not to mind it. Colwah was busy with the wombat, and we ran to Dick. He again beckoned silence; and fetching two stones, he put one of them on the mouth of a hole some eight yards up the bank, and another on a smaller hole within three feet of the water. Dick had transfixed a water-mole, or duck-billed platypus, just as it slept with its nose tucked in and its body rolled up in a coil as soft as a lady's muff. Dick had so effectually speared it, that it lay as if skewered; and, as he thought the insect-fancier would surely like the rarest creature of the region and the hardest to take, he closed the burrow and hoped to capture the female. Ash appeared to think Dick inspired. The latter, with his wammerah for a spade, dug in mid-way between the two holes, and struck on the zig-zag burrow. He with his spear end searched the lower half, and made sure "mullangong" was in her upper chamber. We dug it out like a rat-hole till we came near the top, where it widened into a space as wide as a man's hat; and there in her attic nursery of warm hay and hair, a foot or so from the surface, we found Mrs. Mullangong, with three little ones.

She was easily secured; and they, callow and small as nine-day-old rats, were left there for the dozy crows, that from some trees by the creek had one eye open to windfalls. You may say, had we no remorse? Naturalists, in such cases, have none. Ash was in ecstacies with his capture. The dead one would give a skin to be stuffed, and bones to be set up in a skeleton when boiled; and the living one would add a new chapter to zoology. "It *was* the true *ornithorynchus monotrematus paradoxus,* which he had seen Doctor Drybones, professor of Comparative Anatomy in the London College of ——, demonstrate. And how would old Drybones dance to see a living sample of this disjunctive conjunction of the animal world!" It certainly was a wondrous creature, the first of the kind I had ever seen, or ever heard of so learnedly. The male had spurs like a cock on his legs, in which Dick said there was venom. Its body and head were those of a beast covered with soft brown hair. Its mouth was lengthened and horny, or rather it was a bill, some two inches long and one and half broad. Ash skinned and opened the male. Its stomach had remains of worms, grubs, and soft little shell fish. It had but one vent for solid and fluid fæces, just like a fowl, and it produced its young after the manner of serpents, living and from the egg, though it suckles them by nipples. The colonists call it the water-mole; for it is soft

and squat and burrows like the mole; only it is as large as a small wild rabbit, and has a long tail which serves, like that of an otter, to steer and propel it through the water. It is also called duck-billed platypus, from its bill and its large webbed feet. Dick made a little box of bark and tied it together with kangaroo skin thongs. Colwah was then packed home; his back heavily laden with ducks, teals, pigeons and cockatoos. The mole was carried on his head; and he drove or led or carried the wombat, as best he could. With a good supply of boombilly (tobacco), he waddled off to the huts, having strict orders about care for the live prizes.*

By this time it was near noon; and Dick, looking up anxiously at the sun, said—"Ha, ha, euroka jump up high, high, above waddy; poor fellow, kangaroo, all tumble down, I b'lieve." If I must interpret for Dick, he said—"The sun has mounted to noon, over the tree; the kangaroos are all killed by this time, I guess." We walked as fast as the broiling heat would permit; and, after six miles over brown detached tufts of kangaroo grass, we came to an outlying water-hole, which was surrounded with great gum trees. From behind these old Eagle-Hawk and about fifteen black fellows

* The water-mole may be kept as a pet in its box; and, when let into the water on a string, it will dive with delight to the bottom, where you can see it grub and search for insects like a duck.

made their appearance. He looked daggers at Dick for being late; but some conciliatory grunts in Warragera about "boombilly" made all right. They had been delaying the hunt for us. The gins were in a knoll of trees within beckoning distance. Old Hawk ordered one little fellow, with an enormous mouth full of white teeth, to ascend a tree and look out for the game. He did so; and descried a troop of kangaroos in the distance. These they had tracked from the water, and they were now within reach. Then all advanced to the trees nearest the open feeding-grounds of the game. The gins were beckoned in; and they advanced with long thick branches of gum and mimosa which they gave to the men. They threw out detachments to surround the kangaroos; and each man advanced behind his screen of branches at measured pace. We got up on a tree to see the battue. All is exciting but quiet as midnight. Now the kangaroos take long leisure hops among the tufted grass, and appear disposed to play as they feed. Anon they alternately stoop to eat and rise to look around; the black fellows watching the opportunity to advance, silent as shadows; sometimes standing still as if growing from the ground; but again crawling on. As they receded from us, they became almost undistinguishable from the branches they carried. At last the circle drew close, and the kangaroos rose on end to gaze;

to what a height those enormous boomers can rise! Just then the branches were thrown aside; and the blacks rose shouting and yelling, and hurling their spears at the affrighted game, which ran together, and against each other in consternation, one after another falling by the spears. Some eight fell, and as many more probably escaped. I often afterwards saw the natives hunt emeus in a similar way, and with like success.

Ash remarked, as we were perched on the tree, that as the kangaroos fell within the coil of the blacks; so the blacks are falling within the coils of the civilization they do not comprehend, and that makes them its prey. Just as he spoke a great flying doe bounded towards us, with the head of her young one protruding from her pouch. I shouted and levelled my gun. She stood still stupidly gazing round. "Save the young one for me," said Ash. Had he not spoken, pity would have spared the great innocent-eyed maternal creature. The next instant her neck was perforated by a ball, I had dropped down the right barrel. We descended and secured the young one; and, really, the mother's dying look made me feel for a moment as guilty as if I had killed a fellow-creature. Dick that evening sent the kid, or fawn shall I call it, home, and added it to Ash's menagerie,—the finest of all his pets. The blacks brought in the carcases under the trees beside the water-hole. And *such* jab-

bering of men, gins, and pickaninnies, as was there over one of the richest captures ever even Eagle-Hawk had seen! He walked about giving orders for dinner. The gins with their connois—long flat sticks which they always carry for digging roots, &c.—dug out four grave-like holes, in the bottom of which they laid flat stones, filled up with dry wood, which they burned till the pit was hot as an oven. They then cleared it out, and putting in the carcases for dinner covered them up with hot stones and embers to stew. Roots were dug, grubs taken from the roots of a gum tree, calabashes were filled with water, and by-and-by the stewed kangaroos produced. And, oh! ye admirers of venison, what a meal was there! Such splendid cookery of venison I never saw before. The carcases were cut up; the entrails and the fore-quarters, which are bony and dry, were given, or rather thrown, to the gins and pickaninnies, who ate at a distance; while the hind quarters were eaten by the sable lords of creation. One fellow I saw who dipped his calabash into the disembowelled trunk, and lifting half-pints of pure flesh-juice, cooled and drank it. A liberal distribution of tobacco set the whole circle smoking, with little cane or grass-tree pipes. I saw a pickaninny in the net or narrabung on its mother's back, take her pipe and smoke like fun. Old Hawk set his young men to amuse us after dinner. One pelted another with stones; which,

with his little shield, he turned off in a style that would have saved his head to Goliath. You would hear them crack, and bang, and whirr. Sometimes the assailant would aim low; and then the defendant would leap, perhaps, five feet high. Songs, and dances, and foot-ball followed. How glad I was there was no rum to set them mad, and set them, perhaps, to use us white men as desert. Eagle-Hawk was in his glory. He proposed to us to go with Dick and four others across to the Macquarie "to make young men;" and after deliberation we assented to go.

CHAPTER IX.

VARIETIES OF NATIVE CHARACTER—NATIVE NETS AND FISHING—SAIL DOWN THE MACQUARIE IN NATIVE CANOE—GRAND CEREMONY OF MAKING YOUNG MEN—JUBILEE-CORROBORA AND NATIVE POETRY.

It was a strange situation, you will say, that in which we then were,—pic-nic-ing with savages in their own native wilds, and looking on at their pranks, and interpreting to ourselves, as well as we could, their post-prandial jokes. It was a variation certainly on dinners, and dining-rooms, and toasts, and speeches in either England or Ireland. Our dining-room was the forest, our dinner such as I have described, old Eagle-Hawk was our host, and did the honours, and his ladies gave us music by beating on opossum rugs stretched over their knees or rolled up between them, and by droning and howling their hideous songs, which had a kind of hoarse rhythm in them. But let us do the savages justice. They were most hospitable to us, and maintained a degree of dignity in their bearing to each other; and, I can assure you, their jokes were, some of them, really witty; and alto-

gether it was less savage than I have often seen a feast among baptized heathens after a couple of quarts of potheen. It was interesting to mark the variety of height, features, temperaments, and dispositions among these natives. Man for man, I defy you to take at a venture out of any fair in Ireland, among the finest peasantry in the world, fifteen straighter, taller, better-chested, or better-shouldered men. Generally the muscles of the legs are not so well developed as those of the upper extremities, these latter being more exercised; but they were remarkably wiry and fleet of limb. The foreheads of some retreated sharply, their noses were flat, and nostrils wide; but some had heads as well-formed as those of many white men. Some, like Jackey Wallangoon, were sullen and taciturn; some, like our friend Dick, merry as larks, and talkative as parrots. One of the oddest-looking mortals I ever beheld was "Chinless Joey;" or as the blacks much more significantly called him "Coro"—the crow. His upper jaw and nose were enormous, his lower jaw appeared almost wanting, and his eyes were very large and white, and his voice like his native namesake. If you saw a real portrait of him, you would say it was an ogre to frighten children. Even his own people looked upon him as ugly, and only one poor gin in the tribe would have him as her husband. I have no right, however, to say

that his dispositions were as repulsive as his look. Indeed, I think that, like some rugged dark whites, Joey was rather kind-hearted and gentle, and much belied his looks. The natives were all friendly with us, and evidently pleased that we fared alike with them. Among them were two who had come from the hunting-grounds of a distant part of the tribe to invite Eagle-Hawk and his clan, and to give them a safe-conduct to a corrobora; for to have trespassed on "the sit-down" of others, without this courtesy, would have incurred serious penalties.

I observed some of the natives taking out with great care the small bone of the kangaroo's hind-leg. This they polish with exquisite skill and stick through a hole, pierced for it, in the partition of the nostrils. It is worn on state occasions, and gives a formidable appearance to the face, like a large second row of upper teeth. Dick Nimagauley got a dozen kangaroo's teeth to take home as a present, to make a bracelet for the young woman—or child rather—to whom he was affianced; for blacks get betrothed to mere children, whom they treat with all the liberality their circumstances afford; thus winning their hearts against their wedding-day, when the father or chief —generally the latter—gives the bride away to their future lord and master. I regret to add that this gallantry often ends with the setting of the

honey-moon; and a blow of the waddy, or a wale with a stick, often reminds the weaker vessel of her lord's superiority. Of course there must be jealousy among wives where there is more than one; but generally the first wife is chief of the seraglio, and the others obey. Some one always stands first in her husband's esteem and rules the rest. Many blacks, however, are so poor as only to have one wife all their days. They wonder that "white fellow hab many tousand sheep, and hundrit dog, and none gin only *one*—what for white fellow hab but one gin?" The dignity, sacredness and equality of the one wife, the poor black is too sunken to comprehend. Yet, I believe there are, on the whole, fewer wife-murders or divorces among them, than among much more polished folks.

I find myself, in the meantime, getting lost in a jungle of generalities, I must back to our sporting expedition with the natives. Old Eagle-Hawk talked in pure Warragera with the two Wallangundery blacks. We soon saw it was resolved that but three of the Baroo clan should go to the corrobora. A few words from the old Hawk made the gins cut junks of bark; and, on them as trays, take up the remains of the feast, and the dissected joints of the kangaroos. It is perfectly astonishing how much a gin can carry on a sheet of bark on her head, while she carries her pickaninny in her narrabung on her shoulders, and smokes her pipe,

if she has one. I suppose, old Eagle-Hawk wished to show off a bit before us, for he equipped himself in triumphant hunter's trim. He stuck some grass spears in the fillet round his head, his kangaroo bone through his nose, and a couple of kangaroo tails in his belt. He also slung three opossum skins from his left shoulder; and, as holding his wammerah in one hand, and some three or four long spears in the other, he marched off, the men followed him in Indian file, and the gins in a mob brought up the rear. The men imitated their chief as nearly as might be. One had a large black snake over his shoulder; and others kangaroo tails and opossums; while others mounted several top-knots of cockatoos on small spears, and stuck them erect in their great greasy mat of hair. Others had bracelets of the great white grub on their arms; and others necklaces of kangaroo teeth. The women, too, each had any bit of forest finery she could parade. One had a red handkerchief round her neck; another some tatters of a blue bed-gown round her waist, in style the most grotesque. I do avow that such sights—and I often saw them afterwards on a larger scale—are among the most picturesque and laughable I ever saw. I am always inclined to stand and look and laugh at that thing you call a fop; but no denizen dandies I ever saw surpassed the pomp and strut of these jet-black forest fops. They were shining

with grease, which to them is a real luxury, as it lubricates the skin, keeping it from dryness, and the brain from sun-stroke, and making them as slippery and as hard to hold as an eel. They generally mix red earth with the melted fat. Our old Eagle-Hawk was anointed with fresh oil and earth; and he returned home as vain as a peacock, and, in his way, as fine as the pink of the Sydney swell mob. Dick Nimagauley, Tommy Narang, and a powerful fellow, famous for throwing the spear, Miall Willy, accompanied us, together with the two strangers. When evening came we had passed over some fifteen or twenty miles of a thinly wooded and ill-grassed country; and we rested on the bank of the Macquarie till morning. Many splendid trees grew on the banks of this river; which, like nearly all rivers in Australia, has two sets of banks; one for summer and another for winter. As it was the middle of summer, we camped within the winter banks, under a knot of flooded gums. Never did I see before, and seldom since, so many opossums as came out to feed on the trees and on the ground. They are nocturnal in their habits, and were most agile and playful and came nibbling and squeaking quite close to us. The blacks, standing under the trees, "jobbed" a lot of them for their skins; and Ash succeeded in capturing a young flying squirrel, which lost its hold and fell stunned beside us.

It was a beautiful little creature. The old ones can leap or rather fly forty or fifty feet, at a downward bound from branch to branch, or from tree to tree. They are formed on the principle of the bat. When they stretch themselves for a leap, the skin between the fore and hind legs expands and catches the air, and breaks the fall. They have a certain motion like the flapping of a bird in leaping, which helps to keep them up; and they can steer themselves by the tail. Ash carried the little creature nearly the whole of the following day. You remember that various creature, Bill Arneel,—who was often called the "God-fearing tailor," and "the drunken tailor," and was, from the peculiar motion of those legs broken in his country's service, called the "flying tailor." Had his skin been so loose that, when he stretched out his arms and legs, it would have extended from his little finger to his little toe, straight down along each side, and had he had a long and suitable tail to hang or steer by, he would have been a great human flying squirrel. When I told this to Ash, he said there once had been such creatures, called *pterodactyles*—the flying reptiles (not tailors) of the earth before Adam.

Next morning we were awakened by a chorus of our friends the laughing jackasses, who made the woods and banks echo with their grotesque imitations of all sorts of sounds. This place, so near

the river, was evidently a favourite resort of theirs, and they were vexed with our intrusion. Ash was rather in a critical mood; and wondered aloud why any sensible men could, out of the name of the English king-fisher (*alcedo*), transpose the name (*dacelo*) for these mimics. And then he said to class such disturbers of the peace with halcyons (*halcyonidæ*) was equal to Linæus's placing the fig and upas together among nettles (*urticaceæ*).

We found the blacks in high preparation to "catch munge"—fish. Dick had been acting, with dancing and grimace, the pantomime of the opossum fastening on Ash's head. They were on the bank beneath a great stringy bark tree, not mending, but making their nets. This is always done by the gins, when they are present. We were interested in the process. One with his wammerah raised off a strip of bark, which he pulled upwards till he brought down its fibre twenty or thirty feet long. He handed it to another, who twisted it along his thigh with a roll of his palm; and gave it to the next, who finished the twisting; and the others looped it into a strong and close net. When finished, it was put on a hoop of wattle sapling, and formed a crescent drag-net. This again was tied on a long pole of currywang wattle, and with it they dragged several little bays and nooks in the river, and pulled out lots of small fresh-water

cod, or Peel's perch, for breakfast. They also got a kind of fresh-water muscle which they eat; but we did not fancy it. When we had breakfasted on fresh opossum and fish, with damper, we smoked and thought of our journey; but Dick said, "You fist-rate black fellow. You bell jerran yan along canoe." ("You are first-rate black fellows. You're not afraid to go on the river in a canoe.") "Certainly not afraid, Dick; I swim like a duck; but where is the canoe?" "Buggerie canoe along a waddy,"—("Beautiful canoe on that tree,")—said Dick. A great tree was leaning over the river, with a bend in its trunk. They set to work with tomahawks, and marked out on the bark a canoe of about twenty feet long. In less than half an hour they had raised it up with their spear ends; and, all letting it down gently, we launched a ready-made canoe, that carried the seven of us for twenty miles down the stream. I afterwards, with five weighty men, rode forty miles down the Lachlan in one similarly constructed, only, as it had less of a bend in it, we stopped its ends with grass, bitumen, and bark. We put seats across it, and the natives made it spin along with paddles, where the water was sufficiently smooth and deep. Never in my life did I enjoy a wilder or more joyous excursion than with Dick and his company down the Macquarie to the Wallangundery corrobora. The weather was lovely. The

banks of the river curved and wound through varied scenery. Flocks of waterfowl, ducks, teal, and swans, rose from the river; and glittering clouds of parrots, of all hues and screams, rose from the trees by the banks. At a bend in the river I shot a large swan. Our strange blacks could not have been much accustomed to see fire-arms; for, though they sat steady, their eyes showed a larger margin of white, and they jabbered in excited tones, and looked at my double-barrel as if it were the dreaded Devil-devil's own implement—or even that black and fiery personage himself. The swan could not have been less than twenty pounds weight. He had jet-black outer feathers, but beautiful white and azure down beneath. Ash kept his skin for stuffing; and, as he was full of fat, the blacks got that as a rare delicacy to anoint themselves for the ball that night. His flesh was more relished by the blacks than by us, as it tasted rather fishy. We drew up our canoe on the bank; and, after a walk of about four miles, we came to the scene of the intended corrobora. Before night the gins with their connois dug a circle in the ground, like what a horse might move in while turning a mill. In the centre they raised a pile of dry wood and bark. As it grew dark they took their seats at some distance around; and about twenty young men—natives of course—seated themselves in the circle. Two old men went

into the circle and fastened a cat-gut-like cord of kangaroo sinew round the cutting tooth, next the eye tooth, on the right side of the upper jaw, in each of them. These cords were tied together. The gins began slowly beating time on the opossum rugs, and the crowd began to gather. They were evidently waiting for something to come. When it grew quite dark there was a dead hush. Suddenly a booming and a whirring burst on the ear, and a sensation thrilled through all. This was the magic man, or crajee, coming from the forest with a broad thin lath, nicked in the edges, tied to a kangaroo thong, and swung round his head to make this deep mysterious sound. When he drew near, the dry pile of sticks blazed up, and it revealed such a scene as none can see, but at the grand solemn corrobora that makes young men—the high mass, the grand masonic ceremony of the Australian blacks. As the fire blazed, the gins began their beating time, and singing in low rhythmic chant. The crajee came forward tall and stately, daubed all over with gum, and covered with the down and feather of the eagle-hawk—as though he were a rank abolitionist done in "the pennine robe," and ready for a Southern mob. But mark the crajee, the high priest of this ceremony. His face is painted, and his head done up with feathers, and with the cockatoo top-knots. The fire reveals the warriors standing all round,

with their weapons in their hands. Lines in white pipe-clay are drawn from their breast-bone along their ribs on either side, and down the outside of their legs and thighs; so that they appear a circle of hideous skeletons, surrounding the inner circle of youths, who are about to emerge from pickaninnies to young men. As the crajee approaches, the music rises to its highest pitch; and when it has reached its climax, a number of warriors step forward, and with their waddies knock the young fellows on the side of the head; and as they pull the kangaroo cord, out flies a tooth from every head. The crajee then steps into the middle of the circle, the music having ceased, and all being still, he, in true native Warragera, reads them a long eloquent lecture on the laws of the tribe, and of their own future course, and pronounces punishment on them for any breach of chastity they may have previously committed. One unfortunate wight, who had taken liberties with a gin, was compelled to eat ——!

Every adult male black you see in Australia wants the second incisor tooth in the upper jaw. This is the mark of manhood. Each must loose a tooth ere he can get a rib; and from this strange extraction family life dates. No one can tell whence the immemorial custom is drawn. I do not think they have any tradition of Eden in it. It certainly is a highly impressive and instructive

lesson to the young men; and, for any looker-on to laugh during the ceremony, would be as bad as to giggle in a Catholic cathedral during high mass, and would likely bring down on the offender's head the rebuke of a native club. Next day the young men are led away into a district of the forest, far from every human resort, and there they are compelled to live on certain roots, grubs, and reptiles, with, perhaps, an occasional snake or opossum; being compelled to keep lent, after their fashion, by abstaining from certain proscribed game, especially from kangaroo. For three moons they must not approach a human habitation. They must not salute even the nearest female relative, not even their mother; but if they see a gin must fly from her presence, as if they were Eastern lepers. At the end of three moons they make their appearance in the distance; and their friends go forth, and bring them home to as high a feast, in their way, as is the Roman carnival after lent. Then they live in the young men's camp together; and when any father will betroth his daughter to them, or the chief allot them a wife, they may get married; and when they get the gin in possession they remove to the camp of the married men. We got back next day to the station, having learnt something more of bush-life among the natives. I fear, however, I have dwelt too long on this excursion; and shall for the present finish off with

an account of the jubilee corrobora, when the young men returned after three months; and which we were curious to see.

There was a grand hunt of kangaroos, emus and opossums, just before the end of "the three moons," and a great feast was made to welcome the young men. Their long abstinence was repaid by a carnival; just as that of the Turks, through Ramadan, is repaid by the mirth and indulgence of Beiram. Nature defrauded of enough repays herself by a surfeit. When the new moon was seen, the young men approached the camp, and their friends went out and brought them home with great demonstrations of delight, and the feast commenced. It was not accompanied with any of the gloomy ceremony, or skeleton painting, of the other corrobora I have described. Some of their wittiest fellows, in different clans, had prepared songs, with appropriate music. These they had rehearsed among some friends of their own; and, after the feast, they were recited by the composers two or three times in presence of all the company. After the author had sung and danced his solo till all had caught the spirit, air and dance of the piece, then, with wonderful precision, they commenced the performance. There were some performances in which all joined in common. There was the war dance; in which young men got terrible lessons, as to how they were to yell at their

enemies and how to handle the club, the wammerah, and the spear. The kangaroo and emu hunt, in which one party as hunters enclosed another as victims of the chase, was very laughable. There were also songs of patriotism and love. Some mimicked the white man's ignorance of bush-life, and his peculiar habits and vices. Some of these were exceedingly droll. All sung the following patriotic song, which I think must be in an old dialect, as I never could get any young man who could fully translate it. It inculcates truth to the tribe, and that young men should not wander from it for wives. As they sing it the music commences low, and the men with spears and shields beat time overhead; while they keep time with their feet in the dance. It rises to great vehemence before the end; but closes in deep guttural base and pectoral grunts. Every clan of the tribe knows and sings it:—

"Wa-dun-dha,
Mee 'nya ra,
Mee 'nya colba,
Onga-ēh, wandhu reh,
Onga ayah;—
Bulla ayah gau,
Onga ayah mee 'nya
Arwin dhe
Reh-Eh-eh-ēhh-ehh."

The Bamraman clan satirized a white man called Marsh, who employed them; but broke his word

and did not pay. He always put them off by saying that the great rain (cobon walleen) had made his waggon (wheelbarrow) break down on the way. They tax him with lies (yamble), and threaten no more to wash his sheep (jumbuck) or track his horses (yarraman).

"Cabon walleen tumble down,
Wheel barrow broked,
Bloody rouge Mr. Marsh,
Bell give it blanket.

Cabon yamble Mr. Marsh,
No more wash him jumbuck,
No more track him yarraman,
Black fellow all gone."

Another was a song of joy for the release of convicts at a squatter's establishment, on expiration of their time:—

"Kanga romē mara,
Morealah dhe boreeman,
Kanga romē mara
Menala dhe, dhelobhan gra,
Romē mara-menalah dhe boreeman
Dhelobhan gra."

Ash translated this into "Irish-Warragera," as he said; but it is far below the original:—

"Come tip us your mit, you now may flit,
Ould Erin again to see man;
Come tip us your mit, and dance a bit,
For the croppy is now a free man."

Ash was in raptures with this corrobora. He thought no dancing of stiff-starched gentlemen and straight-laced ladies, in conventional drawing-rooms, had half the freedom or enjoyment of such a free dance, under the great forest trees, in the pure fresh air. Such a ballet, he said, would bring down the house in Covent Garden. This latter allusion I did not then understand, as I had never been in a theatre; but I could well understand how the stamping and whirling and noise of such a dance of wild men might bring down most houses. The corrobora songs you would hear sung for months afterwards, in all the little camps of the natives; and that on Mr. Marsh became a favourite with both blacks and whites. A smoke of tobacco would procure a ludicrous exhibition of it and others at any time by the darkies. If they knew any white man who was halt or lame, or in any way awkward or stupid, their mimicry of such was perfect.

CHAPTER X.

MINUTE PHILOSOPHERS—BLACK HUMAN LIMPETS AND WHITE SHRIMPS IN THE ROCK-POOL AT BAROO—NATIVE TRACKERS AND BUSH RIDERS—BLACK GIN WITH HORNS—LITERARY SLANDERERS OF BLACKS—THE BATTLE OF BAROO — HOMERIC SPEECHES AND SPEAR-CASTS—NATIVE DOCTORS—BELIEFS AND CEMETERIES.

I HAVE heard, my dear J—, that two philosophers spent six weeks in studying the contents of a square foot of the soil of the College Park in Dublin; and of another who, forgetting all the commerce of the seas, spent months in prying into the contents of a little pool in a rock on the shore. They had the art, or science rather, of being interested in little things. Though I am no philosopher, I remember falling into this for amusement-sake in the bush, when I had nothing to do for hours but lie at the foot of a great gum, or box, or iron-bark tree, and look at every insect, bird, or reptile, that met my eye. Often have I thought what enjoyment—what colonies of life—might be found on one tree or bough. When I told this to Ash, he said the universe was a tree rooted in the

Infinite, our planet a twig, and men but insects. If so, how well it is that the Great Planter and Husbandman knows every twig, and its every occupant, and that the Great Father numbers every hair of our head! You ask me for further accounts of our bush-life at Baroo. So you, too, are a minute philosopher, more interested for the time in our station than in all the Australian colonies, and all the world besides; more interested in Dick Nimagauley than in our worthy governor, Major-General Sir Richard Bourke, K.C.B., who nobly ruled the colonies from 1831 to 1837. In my first year at Baroo, Major Mitchel explored the tract where Melbourne now stands; and Cunningham, the government botanist, was killed by the natives. The furor then began about the new pasture lands of Port Philip; and in our nook we could hear, and be excited by, the beat of the great waves of the rising colonial agitation. We were in a pool filled up by the spray of the advancing tide. Into it you desire to look, and read the lives of us black and white shrimps;—the blacks, however, were periwinkles fastened to the spot, and we were the shrimps that were subsequently carried forward by the tide.

In passing, however, I may say the blacks began to be very useful to us, some of them at least. Some of them had powers of tracking cattle, more surely than a hound would fox or hare; though

they did it all by the eye. It was amusing to see the chief, after a stiff bargain, hire out a tracker to follow a stray mob of cattle or horses. You would take him to the spot where they were last seen; where he would go deliberately to work to see and measure the track. You must not hurry him. When he has satisfied himself he starts with a couple of blacks, one on either side, to mark divergence of tracks. Through scrub and stream, and river and forest, and over sand or rock he will go, till he brings you to your object, whether it is alive or dead. When he discovers a dropping of the cattle, or a blade of grass cut by them, he can tell to within a few hours or miles of their whereabouts. Many a fine bullock or heifer they saved for us then; and more for myself afterwards. The kangaroo, opossum, emu, kangaroo-rat, or even the grub, they trace with equal precision. It is as if they could concentrate all their power in the sense of sight.* They were the

* "The ability evinced by these men (the Moormen of Ceylon, the professed elephant catchers, or, as they are called, Panickeas, who inhabit the Moorish villages,) in tracing elephants through the woods, has almost the certainty of instinct; and hence their services are eagerly sought by the European sportmen who go down into their country in search of game. So keen is their glance, that almost at the top of their speed, like hounds running 'breast high' they will follow the course of an elephant, over glades covered with stunted grass, where the eye of a stranger would fail to discover a trace of its passage, and on through forests strewn with dry leaves, where it seems impossible to perceive a footstep. Here they are guided by a bent or broken twig, or by a leaf dropped from the animal's mouth, on which they can detect the pressure of a tooth. If at fault, they fetch a circuit like a setter, till lighting on some fresh marks, they go

best bush-riders I ever saw. Dick Nimagauley and others of his tribe could sit a horse at full speed *through the forest*—where you would think brains could not keep together—and never get a bang by branch or trunk or fallen log. They had great pride in a "yallock on him yarraman." They were excellent hands at sheep-washing; when, to clean the wool or drown the ticks, the sheep were gathered into a pen on the creek side, and one man handed them down to another, till thoroughly washed and thrown on the bank as white as wool, and passed to another hurdle-enclosure. The blacks enjoyed this as rare fun, and sometimes, with their natural love of droll imitation, would practice the same process on the pickaninnies or "stupid cobras." They could also handle the shears well in fleecing; and, being recompensed for what they did, were glad to be

a-head again with renewed vigour. So delicate is the sense of smell in the elephant, and so indispensable is it to go against the wind in approaching him, that the Panickeas, on those occasions when the wind is so still that its direction cannot be otherwise discerned, will suspend the film of a gossamer to determine it and shape their course accordingly. They are enabled by the inspection of the footmarks, when impressed in soft clay, to describe the size as well as the number of a herd before it is seen; the height of an elephant at the shoulder being as nearly as possible twice the circumference of his fore foot."—*Ceylon, by Sir J. Emmerson Tennent.* Vol. II., p. 337.

This is undoubtedly a remarkable instance of the power of application and habit, to give almost preternatural sharpness to the perceptive faculties of the savage; and perhaps an instance also of the hereditary transmission of such sharpness; but though it may equal the skill of the aboriginal Australian in tracking bullocks, it falls short, I think, of his wonderful power of tracking the kangaroo, the opossum, and other much smaller objects of his chase, by marks to a white man totally imperceptible.

occasionally employed. I must, however, say that lounging about the huts and intercourse with shepherds and stockmen (who were nearly all assigned convicts), by no means improved their morals or appearance. Coarse whites often delighted in gratifying their sense of superiority over the ignorant needy natives. When a bullock was slaughtered and a poor gin would loiter about for the offal, you would see the extemporized butcher, perhaps, take the head, and putting it on the gin's shoulder, letting the tail fall down behind, would wind the entrails as ornaments all around her. I remember once meeting a tall strong gin coming thus attired; and, as her great white eyes stared in front of the ox's ears and horns, and the tail dragged behind, she looked such a picture of "Klooty" that I could not help laughing; she, too, laughed heartily, and uttered a speech which meant that, it was good laughing that filled the belly. Poor, degraded soul! I one day passed her when doing as a monkey does with its parasitic tormentors. I expressed abhorrence, and said,—"What for black gin pater bilbi?" She expressed revenge and abhorrence of the fleas, and said, with vehemence, "What for black bilbi pater black gin?" The blacks become vitiated and exterminated among the whites, except, as in the case of the mounted black police, they are brought under wise and free discipline, and taught self-respect. This is

a reason why writers, who only see a few debauched Sydney or Bathurst blacks, so falsely represent them to English readers. If they were all such degenerate wretches, we might not mourn over their extinction; but I affirm, from long personal acquaintance with the genuine unadulterated aborigines, that they are *not* such; that the blacks of the Macquarie, Ovens, Murrumbridge, and Lachlan rivers, whom I knew well, were as fine-looking fellows as could be met anywhere. True, they had not the roast-beef and plum-pudding rotundity of some English aldermen, or the bloated, beery look of many of the lower English; but they were tall, straight, athletic, powerful men; men capable of appreciating kind and just treatment; but of whom you must never appear afraid; for they knew better how to respect strength than to pity weakness. I, on more than one occasion, received rough treatment at the hands of natives; but they were beyond our friendly tribes, and had been rendered furious by the wrongs previously inflicted on them by white men.

Shortly before I left Baroo, there was a terrible battle between our tribe on the Macquarie and one further south-west on the Lachlan river. Lachlan Macquarie—that road-making, town-building, and every-way-energetic governor—had his surname given to so many things, that they at last used his christian name for that great river that col-

lects so many head-waters and carries them to the Murray. The cause of the war was similar to that of the siege of Troy. One tribe had carried away a gin from another. All the clans of the two tribes entered into the dispute; and as you went among them, you could hear them for weeks talking of the coming battle, and preparing for it. You did not hear the sounds of forges and factories and arsenals; but you saw them preparing spears of all kinds. Next to the spear their deadliest missile is the boomerang. The latter missile, none but a black can make; and none can explain how it is that, when this scimitar-like instrument is thrown, it comes back to within a few feet or yards of the thrower. I got to be a pretty good proficient at throwing; but no white man ever equalled Buckley, who escaped from a government gang, and lived with the blacks till he forgot the English tongue. He was a powerful man and could beat any native at throwing the spear or boomerang. A black fellow will throw it so that in its return it will kill his enemy behind a tree or on the other side of a wall, where no weapon could directly reach him. I have seen a native wing a flying bird with it full fifty yards off; and the bird had scarcely fallen to the ground, when the boomerang, in its recoil, buried itself four inches deep beside the projector.

The battle was to be fought near Baroo, as the

Lachlan blacks were the aggressors. The natives, except when excited by the chase, the feast, the corrobora, or some piece of fun, are rather torpid looking; but, for weeks before this battle, they were as much alive as my countrymen before a faction-fight in the south of Ireland, or a party procession in the north on the twelfth of July. Here you would see one fellow cutting currywang wattles and pointing and polishing them into spears, nicking the head to make it hold the bits of pointed quartz and poisonous gum; there, another cutting a slice off the miall, or the iron-bark, and squinting along it, and then bending it under his foot till he gave it the right curve for a boomerang; yonder, another making clubs, and another sharpening tomahawks.

When the day of battle came, the warriors mustered about three hundred on either side, besides numerous black and white non-combatants. The whites, indeed, according to colonial law, could in no way interfere. The battle was fought on a clear space of some fifty acres, between two belts of timber. They approached in line from either side, yelling rage and defiance, and shouting their war songs, and rattling their spears and shields to awake martial fury; just as highlanders are inspired with fighting ardour from the sounds of the pibroch.

The two lines marched up to within about one

hundred yards of each other; and all sat down in perfect silence. We followed up, but some black fellows, who acted as police, came up and said, "These black fellows cabon coola (very angry), you stand narang way from spears." Suddenly one fellow, who had been sitting tailor-wise, sprang to his feet like whale-bone, and sent his boomerang into the air. Then he delivered a shouting, gesticulating speech, in pure native. It ended with the most exasperating of all words to a black, "yamble"—a word that implies blackest meanness and falsehood. This was the signal for all to spring up; but all did not fight at once. Two singled each other out, and speechified and fought till their missiles were exhausted or they were wounded or killed. Then other warriors, friends or kindred, took it up and fought, till perhaps two dozen were engaged; and so it went round. The speeches and spear-casts were marvellously like those recorded in Homer, only of course Trojans and Greeks were better speakers—but not better fighters with bad tools—and Homer could narrate the battles of Troy better than I can that of Baroo. Old Eagle-Hawk and Dick were conspicuous in the centre. I stood behind a tree, in company with Ash, not far behind them. The blood of the old Hawk was up, and, with an eloquently growled sentence, he singled out his man, and they met within thirty yards of each

other between the lines. Most of the fighting ceased when they encountered. Indeed, *we* were so intensely excited by it, we saw nothing else till it was decided. The old Hawk's antagonist flung a wammerah, which the old warrior turned off with a touch of his heeliman, and he discharged his, which was similarly treated. The other threw his boomerang with awful force, and it was splintered to fragments on the little narrow shield; but a portion of it struck Eagle-Hawk's wrist, and I think disabled it. He then delivered his boomerang with all his might, and the other in attempting to stoop his head failed, and it laid open his throat and he bled to death. When he fell, a shout of triumph rose on our side, and old Eagle-Hawk appeared frantic with joy and rage. His defeated antagonist's brother stood forth, and Dick sprang out to meet him; but his father would not yield the delight of another encounter. One of his young gins brought him fresh weapons which she had gathered up. Dick was disappointed, but had to yield. Alas! it was Miall Tommy, the most terrible spear-thrower of the Lachlan blacks, that the exhausted old man had to meet. I trembled for him. The old Hawk threw his spear, and Miall Tommy sprang up at least five feet and let it pass under him. He eyed old Hawk, and throwing himself back, with all his force flung his spear; the disabled shield-arm of the old man failed to

throw it fully off, and it entered his left side and pierced through his heart. He sprang with a cry into the air, and fell instantaneously dead. A yell rose from the opposite ranks. As Eagle-Hawk was being drawn away, with his great venerable head lying back and his eyes staring wide open, I felt an inclination to give Miall Tommy the contents of my gun; but I dare not, and it would have been unfair. Diek only gave a glanee at his father, and, with all the coolness of rage and determination, sprung out to meet the slayer. There was awful disparity between the weight and years of the two warriors; but Diek was a terrible marksman, and as lithe as a squirrel. Miall Tommy threw his spear, and Diek sprang up as high as his own head and let it pass. He was scarcely right on his feet till a wammerah whizzed at his head. He dropped on his haunches and let it pass over. Then, as he rose, before his antagonist could well recover himself, Diek threw his boomerang. Miall Tommy caught it on his heeliman, but it broke, and the longer part flying inwards split open his abdomen, and the bowels fell out over his thighs. The earth rang again with the shout of our blacks. Both sides appeared to become ungovernable, and missiles flew for a minute in showers. You would see fellows leaping or stooping, and hear the rattle of the missiles on the shields. They soon ceased, however, and the wounded man's nearest friend

stood out to do single combat with Dick. Just then king Bogan stepped into the midst and spoke. He caught Dick in his arms, and the chief of the opposite side did the same by his man. They struggled and foamed to get fighting; but the battle was over. The kings had spoken. It lasted about five hours, and there were only six killed and some fifteen wounded.

The skill of the doctors was almost as remarkable as that of the warriors. They had various kinds of gums, leaves, and herbs for dressing wounds, which they applied with great dexterity. When Miall Tommy's bowels fell out, his friends carried him back on a sheet of bark—their stretcher and ambulance—and I saw the mudgegong (doctor) deliberately take his bowels and replace them, drawing over them his caul. He then gummed both sides of the wound, and with healing leaves drew its margins together, and crossed the leaves, as a white surgeon would dress with sticking plaster. I pledge you my veracity, that in six weeks from that time, I saw that same Miall (wild) Tommy kicking foot-ball with all his might, in a hardly-contested game. I *could* not believe it was he, till I examined the seams of the wound across his belly.

I may now mention, that near my own house on the Yeo Yeo, some years afterwards, I witnessed another battle, most fierce and bloody, of the

natives. On that occasion I saw a fellow knocked senselesss with a club. They drew him back for dead. The mudgegong said—"Bell poor fellow yet, Jackey jump up narang while." He laid himself face to face along the seemingly dead man, as the prophet did along the child, and blew with all his might into his mouth. Jackey sneezed and opened his eyes, and rose from his swoon, but did not fight again that day. On that occasion I gained immense popularity with both the belligerents. Their doctors were excellent at curing wounds, but bad at setting broken limbs. I had a lot of tin cases that had held potted meats, which I brought from Sydney, some three hundred and fifty miles into the bush. I used splints of bark and bandages of old shirts to set the broken arms and legs, (I had often doctored and surgeoned cattle) and encased them in the ript-up tins. I was chief army surgeon for both parties, whom I could not dissuade from disorganizing each other. I never thought myself more useful to my fellow creatures than on that day, at the battle of Moran Jarail; and more devoted, exuberant gratitude I never beheld. I saved from deformity for life at least sixteen or twenty men. I could command from my restored patients any amount of game or work, but I did not then require either.

To return, however, to the battle of Baroo. Both parties came to a truce and concluded peace.

Blacks are not revengeful, when they have fought it out and vindicated their honour. They afterwards even feasted and corroborad together. After the battle there was terrible wailing and tearing of hair among the gins over the dead. The five wives of Eagle-Hawk were inconsolable. It was really most touching to see their tearful eyes, torn hair and heads, self-lacerated and bleeding, and to hear their curses and imprecations on the murderer of the old chief.

The dead were buried in a deeply sequestered valley in the forest—the native cemetery at Baroo. Round holes, of about two feet in width and four feet deep, were dug. The legs were drawn up and tied close to the body before it quite stiffened, and the corpse was thus deposited in the hole in a sitting posture, with the head perfectly erect; and a mound of earth, large as a native ant-hill, raised over it. In a native burial-ground I have seen hundreds of these little mounds, marking the last resting place of these children of the forest, over whose graves the tide of life is fast rolling. The natives unquestionably believe in a Supreme Being, whom they call Miki. When it thunders you will hear them say—"Cobon Miki got it powder," &c. ("God is blazing off lots of powder in his hunting grounds to-day.") Their principal idea of God, however, is power, and that, destructive power. I do not know, and never could learn, from whence

they got this name and idea of God. That *they have it,* I am absolutely certain. Weeli means opossum; weeki, flour; meeki, young woman; and Miki God; but of course they can have no connection in meaning, though like in sound. I have thought their name Miki might be their pronunciation of Mighty or Almighty; but they have had it in regions where that attribute of God was never heard from white lips.

They also believe in transmigration of souls; or that "black fellow jump kangaroo, opossum, emu, or white fellow." In a clan near Baroo, there had died a black man called Balludery, who had a peculiarly bent arm. Shortly after his death, a white man, with a similarly curved arm, came to live in the neighbourhood. The moment the widowed gin of the black man saw him, she cried out and danced with joy, and clung to him, saying —"Oh! Balludery, mine Balludery, you jump up white fellow. You always good to me, mine Balludery." Wherever he went she thus clung to him; and the tribe would do anything for him, under the same impression, that it was their old friend risen from the dead. They carried tons of split timber and bark to build his huts, &c. It was really most touching to see the affection of the poor woman. I am sorry to say the supposed risen saint was not worthy of the world (except the wrong side of it) from which he was supposed

to have come. He was very fond of what mortals perversely call uiskebah, or (what means the same) *eau de vie*. Into this "water of life" he drank till it was his death; and therefore the whites, parodying the name Balludery, nicknamed him "Barley-dry."

The natives have always great veneration—and by night dread—for the burial places of their fathers. They often leave the dingos to ensepulchre a "balogan," or old woman; but the men, especially the warriors, they inter with all honour. So it was with old Eagle-Hawk and his fellows. There was his opossum cloak, in which his heraldic symbols of the eagle-hawk, and other devices, were tatooed, or rubbed in with red ochre. This was the inheritance of Dick, together with the dogs and arms. When the bodies were buried, the bark on the sides of the trees next the graves was cut off, and the coat of arms of each cut into the wood. The same you would see on all the trees around. These trees were the living memorials of the dead; and it was part of the religion of posterity never to disturb the opossum or other game on them; and never to cut a sheet of bark or branch of them for a (hut) gunyah. I must say I have often had most reverent feelings and solemn reflections awakened within me on passing one of these silent congregations of the aborigines. Though no knell ever makes these valleys to echo; and no spire with silent finger points to heaven; yet here

are spots consecrated by human sorrow and by dust that shall yet hear the trump of God. Farewell; my yarn for the present is done. These cemeteries recall the most awful chapter in the history of my life; but it is not quite the next or the next.

CHAPTER XI.

BAILED UP—DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP—SPLENDIDLY SHARP PRACTICE OF LOCK — LAWRENCE TAKEN IN A LEGAL NOOSE.

The latter part of the time I remained at Baroo with Ash, Alder and Lock, was not very pleasant. It was not without its incidents, however. One evening, as young Ash and I were returning from a distant part of the sheep-run, a fellow bailed us up with a great musket in his hand, which he pointed at Ash's breast, and threatened to shoot him if we did not give up all the money we had. I perceived there was no lock on the musket, and stepping up I wrenched it out of his hands; and, having given him a sound banging with it, dismissed him and took it home. Little adventures of this kind together made young Ash and me fast friends. Why I mention this you will see by-and-by. Lock and he, as I before said, could not sort together. We all lived in the one house, and ate at the one table. And as husband and wife, by night and day, have the very best opportunities of mutual annoyance, so young Ash and Lock had the next best. They did not let them slip, for

two more opposite characters than close worldly-wise Lock and candid, generous Ash, could not well be. At length Ash and Alder noticed Lock for dissolution of partnership. Before news of this got abroad, he went to a most opulent squatting firm near Bathurst and induced them to receive him as partner, on condition of his bringing so much capital with him. He was looked on as one of the ablest buyers and salesmen; and so he was. I never knew a man who, before he bought, could so persuasively say—"It is nought, it is nought;" or so quietly show the good points of what he had to sell. I never knew a man who could so steadily and silently keep a long complex plan in view, and with true calculation realize every step. Messrs. Bullock and Sheepshanks were quite right in thinking they had got an able partner in Jerrold Lock. The latter soon gave proof of his business habits; for he had a stamped agreement, with regular articles of partnership, at once drawn up by his favourite solicitor, Mr. Holdfast, of Bathurst.

Lock drew, as well as I remember, £550 from Ash and Alder. Perhaps it was that he feared money would injure me; but, except the experience I had gained, and the clothes and stores I had drawn, he proposed I should have only some £10 for my two years. Young Ash spoke very strongly, I was told. He declared that if the man that did

work deserved money, I deserved it better than Lock. They generously gave me £60. When they had settled all, and the other partners gave me a strong recommendation to a magistrate, whom (as the history is so modern I prefer an occasional change of names) I shall call Benjaman Pyrphren, Esq. He engaged me at a salary of £50 per annum, as general overseer. But to return to Lock. No sooner had his former partners heard of his intended partnership with Bullock and Sheepshanks, than they thought it their duty to advise them of Lock's style of sharp practice. They took the alarm, and repudiated the agreement. Lock smiled at them, and directed them to his solicitor. The result was, that they paid him some four hundred pounds of damages for breach of contract. He had then upwards of £1,000 in money and stock. My employer had a son-in-law lately appointed a stipendiary magistrate, by name and title Edward Cabbage, Esq., S.J.P. He had seized the confiscated stock of an old government man, who, after his emancipation, had become a successful stockholder; but who had to fly for a grievous misdemeanor. The law was, that such stock should be sold by public auction. But as only some fifty head of very poor cattle were found at the station, Lock went to the magistrate and offered to buy them by private contract; for it would not be worth while to have a public

sale of so few and such poor cattle. Cabbage consented, and sold them on account of government, at two pounds a-head. Lock had a bill of sale of all the stock of Dick Flylaw made out at the same price. He asked me to witness the payment of part of this money, as well as the magistrate's signature. He had been very gracious that morning, having brought news from home, and I was soft enough to comply. He put the whole affair into the hands of Holdfast. Before a week, above two hundred head of prime cattle, belonging to Flylaw, were driven in out of the bush with his unmistakeable brand. I suppose Lock had information that the outlaw's friends had driven them away. They were worth more than double what Lock bought them for. The result was, that my employer and Cabbage had to compromise with Lock for three hundred pounds. My employer, before the suit came on, wanted me to go a hundred miles up the country to look for stray cattle till the trial should be over. Lock abjured me by God and honour and friendship to do justice between man and man. I told my employer I must do so, as a witness. He grew black in the face, and answered—"Then, remember it."

Lock was making a rapid fortune. He soon set up stock-keeping for himself; and one day he met me he gave me excellent advice, and backed it home by saying—"Lawrence, I came to the colony

as poor as you ; how is it you cannot get on like me ? I fear you will be all your life in the service of others." I felt my inferiority, and sang dumb ; though I felt tempted to compliment him on his skill in making law contribute to his gain from the fruit of the industry of others ; whereas I could only make money by my own hard work. I did not then recall to mind the fable of the tortoise and the hare.

Before a month my employer had his noose set for me. He told me to take his saddle-horse and go into Bathurst to enquire of certain stockmen concerning a mob of cattle bearing his brand, that had strayed into the bush before I took oversight of the station. I did so ; and he had me summoned to the bench on the charge of deserting my duties on the station without leave ; and, moreover, riding off his own saddle-horse. There was no witness, but God, that he gave me the orders ; and several witnesses of my being in Bathurst at the time he said. My character was blameless, and known through all the district ; but all in vain. My employer's brother-magistrates believed him and disbelieved me ; and, though he was plaintiff, he sat on the bench while I was sentenced to *three months' imprisonment in Bathurst jail.* Young Ash and his uncle had removed away to Sydney, I think, and Lock was nowhere. I felt stunned by the unjust and unexpected blow ; but this is a simple, unvarnished

statement of facts. Indeed such things were quite common to men in the colonies then; though I did not then know it. When I came to understand such things, I did not so much wonder at my treatment, or that so many unfriended and injured men betook themselves to the bush and to the wild justice of revenge. It is rather a damaging thing to a man to say of him, that he was convicted and imprisoned once in his life; but my experience has taught me charity in judging; for if I ever did a true and upright act, it was that which got me convicted and imprisoned.

But now of Lock; though it anticipates my story. When he heard I was in prison he came to see me. He heard all; and learned that for his sake my salary was cancelled, my deposit forfeited, and myself without money or character, and in jail. He was dressed like a gentleman; and as my offence was one of the lightest, I had leave to walk with him to and fro to the porter's lodge, and sit down there and converse. When he heard all my story he burst into tears; at least I thought he did so, for he averted his head and used his silk pocket-handkerchief. When he mastered his emotions, he paid me the most flattering compliments I ever received, as to my manliness and integrity. "Lawrence," he said, "some money will be useful to you here;" and he put some money in my hand. I looked at it. It was silver. I counted

fifteen shillings exactly. I felt my blood boil. "Lock," I said, with a choking voice, "this is just the change exactly of the five-pound note, out of which you bought my coat and boots in Sydney." "That is it," he said; "Good bye, Lawrence; God be with you." Perhaps it was as well he did not leave me any more money or promise any. Whether *he* calculated the effect or not, his cool act of prudence and literal justice did produce in me an effect that never left me since. I then and there resolved to apply to no living man for help in future, and to depend only on God and on my own resources. Alas! I also formed a resolution never to write home till I should have something really cheering to write; and the only favour on earth I would have asked of Lock was, to maintain utter silence concerning me to my family till they should hear from me themselves. In regard to this I shall tell you more again; but from that day Lock and I did not meet for nearly twenty years. But next for my experience in jail.

CHAPTER XII.

STRUILBY IN PRISON—PEN-PORTRAITS OF COLONIAL JAIL-BIRDS—THE ARCH-PICKPOCKET—THE WITTY BUSH-RANGER—THREE MONTHS FOR BEING ASLEEP—VARIOUS DEVILS—THE SUPERSTITIOUS SHOP-LIFTER—THE CLEVER SCOTCH DEVIL—THE PRISON POET.

I BELIEVE it is not a pleasant thing to be sent to prison anywhere, not even to one of your best warmed, ventilated, and provisioned avaries for English prison-birds; but it was most unpleasant to be sent to the vile, stenchful prison of Bathurst, which was supposed to serve justice before the present respectable one was built. It was a long, low room, where all the male prisoners herded together, without either regard to health or decency. There were a couple of cells at the end of it for female prisoners; who were generally *much viler than* the male; on the principle, I suppose, that nothing scalds more dreadfully than boiling honey, and that the fairest things in health are the foulest in decay. I cannot tell you the depression, that sunk like mid-night on my heart, when I found my vindictive employer had succeeded in getting me

falsely condemned and imprisoned. Before I left prison, however, he suddenly expired of apoplexy. I had rather again go to prison than do as he did by me; for a man may have a clear conscience who is falsely sent to prison; but not so he who falsely sends him. Though he was my accuser, he sat on the bench with his brother magistrates when I was sentenced; and thus the decision was illegal as well as cruelly unjust. But I got over it all; and I now leave the whole affair to that tribunal where there is no partiality. The police treated me most respectfully, and did not put "the darbies" on my wrists. They knew there was no need. Yet, even though put in jail respectfully, I felt it a dreadful thing that my father's son should be put in jail. You know what pride he had in his repute for honesty, and for never being in court but once, when the magistrates would not swear him, but took his word instead of an oath. I felt my honour sadly sullied; and I felt it would be worse than death for my family at home in Ireland to hear I was *in jail*. I knew, however, I was innocent; and I tried, as school-boys exhort each other before a flogging, to "keep a stiff upper lip." In this I was helped by a spectacle that made me laugh, though going to disappear in the "stone jug." It was in itself a ludicrous sight, and recalled one most pathetically laughable. About four months prior to this, there was at Baroo, in

the capacity of stock-keeper, a loose haveril of a fellow called Walker. I forget what part of John Bull's land was his calf-ground. He had purchased from a black fellow a gin for three months, for six new clay pipes and a fig of tobacco. At the end of the stipulated three moons, the black fellow came to claim his gin. Then the scene began that beggars description, and before it was over all hands at the station were round Walker's hut. The black imperatively claimed his gin. She began to wail and scream—"Yackaday, yackaday;" and, throwing her arms around the white man, could scarcely be torn from him; he bellowing and clinging to her much in the same way. This made the blacks wild with mirth and laughter; indeed, even Lock laughed heartily, as did we all. We expostulated with Walker for setting his affections on a black woman, and she another man's wife. He could not see the impropriety of taking *one* wife, where her husband had several left. He was inconsolable, and proposed a fresh bargain for her. The black consulted with his friends; and demanded *a fat bullock* for giving her for three moons more. As the stockman had some head of cattle of his own, the bullock was given; and the blacks held a high feast and dance, in which the poor degraded woman was one of the merriest, and then went back to Walker. I never heard how this love-affair ended, as I left Baroo

before the three moons; but the next time I saw Walker was on the occasion I have referred to. He was then in Bathurst, filling up the black void in his affections, by getting married to a poor green immigrant girl. Such bridegroom and bride I never beheld before or since. He stood in a pair of white mole-skin trousers, very stiff. They might have fitted a giant for size; but lay loose about him. He wore also a blue jacket and canary-coloured waistcoat, equally large. His hat stuck on his head by a great pad of rags between it and his forehead. They were all borrowed, I think. The bride was suitably dressed. She had an immense old Leghorn hat, the rim of which, being large and slack, hung down about her ears and swayed with the breeze; and yards of ribbon floated from it down her back. The rest of her bridal dress was in keeping with this. Had I been free I should have joined, I think, the crowd that followed them. I wonder how the parson (who had not then to go where I was going) could stiffen his face enough to perform the marriage ceremony. It was the most laughable wedding I ever saw; and, depressed as I was, this flash of the comic made me for a moment forget my own tragedy.

You have been in a prison, I dare say, but have never been a prisoner. You ask the benefit of my observation on the *élite* of colonial felony—the cream of the criminality of the British empire. I

am not ashamed before my own conscience of having been in prison; I am not sure that it was not a benefit. It certainly was a rare opportunity of studying human character in its *un*disguise. Was it not Audubon who went out to the wild forests of America to paint from life certain rare birds? I did not come out here to paint jail-birds; but if I could give faithful word-pictures of those sixty inmates of Bathurst old jail, they would exceed any in the naturalist's portfolio. What a company of adepts in crime; and adepts in law too! For there they would pass hours trying, and pronouncing sentence on, each one; sometimes they would gather into separate knots playing cards, or chaffing, or yarning:—anything to kill time, keep up the spirits, and banish thought. Most of them were as merry as drunken skippers, who had thrown aside chart and compass, and laughed through the hour that preceded wreck on the breakers a-head. But let us sketch:—

One of the most sinister and notorious characters among them is Johnny Stutters, commonly called "Dandy Child." He has a strong Dublin accent. His face is as utterly without a shred of hair as his heart is without conscience. Nature denied the one and sin killed the other; and the absence of both facilitated his trade. From the smoothness and smallness of his face he has quite a youthful look, though considerably above forty. He ap-

peared a mere child at fifteen. Then he was in league with a female pickpocket more accomplished than himself. She was finely dressed as a governess and he as a gentleman's son. In this capacity they went through jewellers' shops, she looking at costly articles and he quietly depositing them in pocket or sleeve. One day, as he tells, he professed to have lost his governess, and in great distress went into the shop of a jeweller, who took the distressed child into his parlour, and behind his counter, till his governess should be found. When she came in the distraction of grief and joy to take him home, he had stolen more than a hundred pounds' worth of costly articles. For this or some other offence he was lagged. When wishing to narrate one of his most dexterous and comic exploits, he relates how he robbed a blacksmith in the colony and was tried for it; but witnesses broke down and he escaped. When coming out of court he met the blacksmith and said, "Let us have a glass together, and not part as enemies." The poor blacksmith consented; and, while they took a glass together, Johnny abstracted his purse, containing sixteen pounds—the price of his tools and forge, which he had sold with a view to removing to another part of the country. The smith soon missed the purse after they parted, and ran in distress to the magistrate, to say Stutters had robbed him again. He was dismissed as a silly fool or an

arrant knave. Pocket-picking was an art in which even colonial thieves—the first of their kind—yielded the palm to the flexible fingers and scheming brain of the notorious Dandy Child. He was a good hand at sheep-shearing, but he ever and anon relapsed into his more congenial trade of *fool-fleecing*. He had fingers so flexible that he could bend them back to his wrist, and a voice of great softness. Yet I do not, with some philosophic fellow-prisoners, believe in the conscience-drugging doctrine that, he was as certainly made to be a pickpocket as the Duke of Wellington to be a General. He who made Johnny Stutters had said—"Thou *shalt not* steal;" and he did not make men to break his commands.

Irishmen, unhappily, have the pre-eminence here. The most notable and powerful man among the sixty in this dreary, filthy room, is Christie Leonard, another Dublin man. The Irish capital is quieter without him. He is an erect, fine-looking, powerful man, about five feet eleven in height, and built in proportion. His countenance wears a habitual look of determination; though it has not an unpleasing expression. He was transported for robbing a man with violence in an unfrequented street. He was in an iron gang in the Blue Mountains, and made his escape several times, but was recaptured; on every occasion getting so many hundred lashes at intervals, as he could bear them,

and so many additional pounds of iron. At length he escaped, and got fire-arms, and took to the bush; and for months eluded the police, and committed daring robberies. I do not think, however, he ever took a life; and he says he never would do so, except to save his own. A policeman once attempted to capture him single-handed. They exchanged several shots; one of Leonard's shots carried clean away the knot of the policeman's neck-handkerchief; then he ceased from the duel and let the bushranger escape. At length he was taken very softly. He was prowling along the Macquarie river, and fell into the fork made by the junction of the Turon river with it, where the Ophir and Turon diggings afterwards broke out. The police tracked his horse among the gullies, and knowing that no stock-man ever would ride in there, they followed him in; and as he was coming out, they, with cocked carbines, met and took him. He is sentenced to be hanged, for which purpose he is soon to be taken to Sydney. In the mean time he is as merry and witty, as if his wedding was to come off in a week. Life is to him a worthless thing, and he appears to have no idea whatever of an hereafter. An amusing scene lately occurred in which he was a prominent character. A soft young fellow "a new chum"—got a situation in Bathurst in the store kept by an extensive publican. It was the time of sheep-shearing; and custom was

abundant, and the poor fellow was found asleep at the desk; for which he has got three months in this den, among such as Leonard. The moment a prisoner comes in, all the old inmates cry "fish," and some of them search him for money, tobacco, or anything that may have escaped search at the lodge. There is no use in concealment, for have it they will, and make common stock of it. When this poor fellow entered there was a rush to search him; but he was crying and sobbing as if his heart would break. Leonard beckoned the others back and took on himself the office of consoler in mock gravity, but with some real spice of kindness, I believe. "Poor fellow," he said, "What have you got, and what for?" "Three months for being asleep," blubbered the new chum. "Well, cheer up, my poor fellow, when you hear my case it is almost as bad as your own. I was a "lifer" for taking a bit of tin; and now, because I've run away and grazed a constable, they're going to take me next week to Sydney and "*weigh me in the county crane.*" The new-arrived did not understand this latter designation of the gallows, and asked what he meant. The other replied "I'm to be *hanged* at Sydney next week; and sure that is worse than your case—cheer up." This raised a chorus of laughter, and Leonard went on as drolly as if he were clown at a country show. "See this poor friend of mine," he said, "He's as innocent

as myself; and they are going to give him a leap from the parson's hustings, and three kicks at the end of a rope. Oh my poor fellow! you are one of John Bull's calves that don't take to the fairy's dance—the last jig at the end of a rope without rafters under your feet. But you'll not be hanged —for a long time—so cheer up." This poor youth I really pitied. He came up to my corner, where I usually stood for light and air at the bars, and said, "O, are not you Mr. Struilby?" "Yes." "Well we all canvassed your case and believed you were wronged; but I am *so glad to see you here.*" This was rather an awkward compliment and got him laughed at again, but I knew what he meant, and tried to advise and cheer him. I thought it most iniquitous to put him in prison for such a slight offence as he had committed.

But to return to Leonard. He had been a pugilist in Dublin; and no man in the prison could face him except perhaps one. But he was very civil to me. Those of us who were in for three months had very much better fare than he and others got. Yet, at our meal hours, he and they would not look near us, or appear to desire anything of our better cheer. We had meat and soup, with plenty of vegetables for dinner; but their fare was coarse and poor. I often admired independence and honour among these thieves. They appeared to look on the authorities alone as

their enemies. The morning came for Leonard and others to be removed to Sydney. A file of soldiers stood in the entrance before the inner gate, and in presence of the prisoners primed and loaded. They had flint guns. When Leonard's name was called, he turned and said to us—"Now boys, remember you'll hear of me being shot or in the bush soon." He was handcuffed with another prisoner to a chain, and committed to two mounted policemen. They came to the sod-hut on O'Connor's plains, at the entrance to the Blue Mountains, and stopped to camp for the night. At the next stockade there was a lock-up, but they were too late to reach it. The policemen dismounted and laid their carbines against a log. They went to light a fire. One of them retired to a little distance out of sight, and Leonard sprung at the loaded carbine, and had just liberty of hands enough to present it at the other policeman, swearing he would shoot him dead if he spoke: he compelled him to take out his key and unlock their handcuffs. When the other policeman returned, he was met with a presented carbine, and both were compelled to exchange clothes with the prisoners, who handcuffed them and rode off on their horses into the bush. The two policemen were degraded from ever wearing uniform again; but the triumph of Leonard was only very short. In policeman's uniform he rode up to a house

and asked had any strangers been there. Several policemen were in the house, and they wondered to see a constable they did not know. They rushed out and recognized Leonard. One of them seized the bridle of his horse, while three others covered him with their carbines. His horse was too tired to obey the spurs, and he had to give in. In a fortnight from the time he left us he returned to prison again, and in triumph told how sheepish the policeman looked when changing dress with him. In fact, he was the hero of the prison while he stayed, and appeared as indifferent to his fate as if his heart had been stone. He despised all petty thefts, and all supple-fingered thieves like Dandy Child. No doubt there was a bit of bravado in his bearing, and had he been in a solitary cell he would have felt very differently. He would have made a most daring, gallant soldier, but he was "lost" to God, to society, and to himself. He was hanged in Sydney, dying as impenitent as he lived.

Another man, of very different stamp, was Mr., yes, *Mr.* Macarthy. He and three others were in for six months, for breach of contract in sheep-shearing. There was a deep tap-root of religiosity in his nature; he was the quietest and most intelligent man in the prison. He was a great reader, and often lent me books. He was a strong devotee of Roman Catholicism;

and some twelve prisoners, of his own persuasion, looked up to him as *the* saint of the jail. Indeed, he was an obliging fellow, and a better scholar than the average. He often wrote letters for prisoners; and some petitions he wrote were beautifully done. He was a great believer in apparitions and spirits; he would tell ghost stories till the hair would rise on his own head; but as my faith in ghosts was not so great, I could merely keep a grave face. One he told I cannot forget. He had been, before his transportation, one of a company who dispersed themselves widely, making thieving tours through the north of Ireland. He had traversed ground, and could speak of persons I knew well, and could tell what he lifted out of shops where I used to purchase. At length he got seven years for shop-lifting. His wife took ill and died with grief when he was in prison. He was standing, he said, near a window in prison, just like this of mine, when his wife's departed spirit came, and with either hand caught the bars outside and stood before him. He inquired, "what is now your place of rest?" "In that hay-stack," she said, pointing to one near, "for a time, then I leave for heaven." This, I suppose, he saw in a dream; but I am persuaded he firmly believed it, and thought she was often near at hand. It may seem strange that amid such practices he could maintain such feelings. But so

it was. God is judge, and he alone, of that mysterious complexity—a human heart. In my experiences of men in the colony, nothing has struck me more than the evident inconsistencies and contradictions that often meet in the same character. I never met a more honourable man, to whom I have often trusted my life, than one whose sentence of hanging was commuted to transportation for life. I have met honour in godless thieves, and deceit in apparently devout men, poetry in pick-pockets, and plodding prose in men glittering in uniforms and fineness.* I know that where religion goes all through a man as spiritual life-blood, it will make him all right, and that it is often blamed for what is the want of it.

Scotland had many representatives among these worthies. Of all colonial devils the English is the strongest, the Irish the merriest, and the Scotch the keenest and best educated. Here is a Scotchman who had been a subtle but daring robber. Among other exploits that he told with great gravity, and without a sign of compunction, was his robbery of a clever Englishman, on the highway, of a star-lit night. He presented to his victim's breast a horse-pistol, with burnished barrel, and demanded his purse. He expostulated, but

* This mysterious contradictiousness of character, this diamond-in-the-toad's-head, or jewel-in-the-swine's-snout principle, was sometime since singularly illustrated in the prison poet, Suffolk. See note at the end of this Chapter. We believe the intelligent reader will forgive its length. Ed.

was threatened with instant death. "But," said the traveller, "even if I give my purse you will shoot me." "Na, na," said the robber, somewhat touched, "I wud na da *thaat*." "Then," said the traveller, "I'll give my purse with one hand if you give me the pistol with another." Quite softly the robber agreed; and then, as he glided away, the traveller roared, "Stop, robber, or I'll blow the contents of this pistol through you." The robber, smiling, said, "Pooh, maun, ther's na powther in it," and was off. Another told how he saw a merchant going to the bank, and, making up to him, politely inquired the way thither. He was as politely shown; and, as they were going in, he saw the motion of the merchant's hand towards his money-pocket. There was a little delay by pressure of customers at the door, and during that moment he abstracted the merchant's notes by "cross-famming" him. He let his friend go forward, but he quickly retreated. He knew in a moment he would be followed; but he had crossed an iron-grating on the foot-path to the bank, and crumpling up the notes he dropped them down there; and, as he was quietly walking on, the merchant and a constable made him prisoner. He vented his gentlemanly surprise and indignation at such an affront. He was searched and liberated with an ample apology. That night, by the aid of a little boy's arm, he picked up the two hundred

pounds' worth of notes. Such were some of the more superficial features of a few of the most notable of my fellow-prisoners.

THE PRISON POET OF AUSTRALIA.

(From the *Ballaarat Star.*)

Crime is so entirely associated in our minds with that which is low and debasing—with ignorance and depraved instincts—that the idea of linking its children with the graces and refinements of poesy seems an absurd and impossible one. We have before us, however, a genuine instance of this strange amalgamation, and now introduce it to our readers.

Owen H. Suffolk, as he stood in the dock on Tuesday morning, to receive a sentence of seven years upon the roads, in addition to the one he was then undergoing for another offence, presented a peculiar contrast to the criminals who preceded and followed him.

Suffolk, of whom we know very little, has been a criminal since boyhood. As a boy, we understand, he committed a forgery, and was sent to Parkhurst, where he was looked upon as so far reformed that with others of his own age he was sent as a free colonist to Victoria to earn a new character. Crime had a strange fascination for him,

however, and he rushed into it with all the ardour of youth. One of his first exploits was robbing the mail between Geelong and Belfast, for which he was rewarded by being sent on the roads. While in prison he wrote the following, which appeared in the *Argus* in May, 1852:—

THE DREAM OF BOYHOOD.

'Twas night, and the moonbeams palely fell
On the gloomy walls of a cheerless cell,
Where a captive sought a brief repose
From the bitter pangs of his waking woes.
O'er the dark blue waves of the mighty deep
His spirit roam'd in the dream of sleep,
To each well-loved spot of the peaceful shore,
Where joyous he rov'd in the days of yore.
Yet still as he roam'd, by fancy's pow'r
Through the halcyon scenes of his childhood's hour,
His heart was crush'd with a weight of pain,
And he seem'd enthrall'd by the captive chain,
And he vainly sought 'mid his native isle
For the glorious light of freedom's smile!
The vision chang'd—from the cloudy waves
Of a mountain top that kiss'd the sky,
He gaz'd beneath on a world of slaves
Array'd in the mantle of liberty.
He saw a King with a jewell'd crown,
Whose brightness rivall'd the beams of day,
While thousands knelt at his gorgeous throne,
And own'd the might of his sceptre's sway;
His will was law to the countless crowd,
Who quail'd 'neath the monarch's piercing eye
That fiercely flash'd like the thunder-cloud,
When the lightning reddens the lurid sky.
In the battle-field his arm was might,

And his kingly heart was firm and brave,
But he knew not the charm of freedom's light—
He was but ambition's willing slave.
Then he turn'd from the monarch's throne to gaze
On a peaceful cot in a lowly dell
Which, lit by the sun's departing rays,
Seemed a scene of bliss where no woes could dwell,
And sweet was the sound of the ev'ning breeze,
As it softly sigh'd through the leafy trees,
And danc'd on the rill which flow'd along
Through the flowery dale with a murm'ring song.
At the cottage door, with locks of white,
An old man gaz'd on the Western sky,
And watch'd the sun's declining light,
As it slowly sank from his joyless eye.
In that retreat of heav'n-like calm,
Remote from men and wordly show,
He vainly sought a Lethean charm
From a gloomy past of guilt and woe.
Alas! his spirit even there
Where all around was bright and fair,
Was firmly bound to each crime-stain'd hour
By vivid mem'ry's painful pow'r.
And conscience o'er the sea of time
A lurid shade of darkness cast,
And conjur'd up the deeds of crime
That chain'd him to a guilty past.
In the captive's dream of fancy wild,
He look'd no more on the man of care,
His gaze was fix'd on a beauteous child,
Who knelt at its mother's feet in prayer.
Its little hands were clasp'd—its eyes
Uplifted were to Paradise—
Its simple words of faith and love
Were register'd in heav'n above;

Recorded there with angels' tears
Who wept o'er the hopes the mother built,
For they look'd through the vista of countless years,
And saw it fetter'd to future guilt.
And next he saw a beauteous pair
A gallant youth and maiden fair,
Reclining in a vine-wreath'd bow'r
At evening's gentle balmy hour.
They vow'd their love should ever be
Immutable as heav'n's decree;
And each fond hope of future bliss,
Was seal'd with an impassioned kiss.
Their voices seem'd a magic lay
Out-rivalling eve's melting gale;
Their beauty was more fair than day,
But oh! their hearts were weak and frail,
Their thrilling words and glances told,
Of latent passions deep and wild,
Impure desires uncontroll'd,
That ev'ry virtuous thought beguil'd.
The flowers that scented the evening gale,
The stars that shone from their home above,
Wept tears of grief o'er the guilty pair,
For they were the slaves of unholy love.
Then he turned from the things of earth to gaze,
On the regions of immortality,
Where seraphs chanted their hymns of praise,
And every tongue was tuned with joy;
There countless myriads cloth'd in white
Were freed from the shackles of sin's dark hour,
To dwell in those blissful realms of light,
Unfetter'd for ever from Satan's pow'r.
And freedom's waters, 'neath many a beam
Of brightness, curled on a balmy shore,
And all who quaff'd of the limpid stream

Were loos'd from bondage for evermore.
'Twas now the harsh-ton'd prison-bell,
Loud echoed through the captive's cell,
And rous'd him from his misery's rest,
To all the woes that pierc'd his breast.
He rose—the vision of the night
Again was present to his sight—
He knelt—with fervency he pray'd
Through faith in Christ his sins forgiv'n,
The narrow boundary of the grave,
Should be the vestibule of heaven;
Where disenthrall'd from all below,
To dwell beyond the starry sky,
Free from the pains of earthly woe,
In never-ending liberty!

OWEN SUFFOLK,

The author of the *Lost Star of Love*, &c.

Good conduct, and his poetic tendencies won him the interest of some influential gentlemen, and a mitigation of his sentence was the result, but Suffolk had made his bed, and was determined to lie in it. He was soon after in gaol for other crimes, and his assumed repentance and obvious powers of mind induced Sir William A'Beckett, then Chief Justice, to interest himself deeply to procure a mitigation of sentence. Once more Suffolk was allowed a chance but his liberty was short. For another crime, with the nature of which we are unacquainted, he was sentenced for a term of years to the roads, in addition to which the sentence of yesterday places him for a very large portion (at least) of his future life without the pale of society.

And yet when this man was in prison he could write the following, which have come into our hands:—

THE PRISON BELL.

Hark! lo the bell of misery; 'tis awakening up again
Each broken spirit from its brief forgetfulness of pain.
Its sad sound seems to me a death-wail for the past,
An elegy for buried joys too pure and good to last.
It haunts me like an echo from the dark depth of despair,
And conjures up the fiend-like forms of misery and care:
The saddest of the sorrowful, its tones bright dreams dispel,
For waking woes are summoned by the doleful prison bell.
It tells me that life's coming years must be long years of pain,
And that my brow with innocence can ne'er be wreathed again;
It tells me that I am not now what once I used to be,—
A dearly loved and loving one with spirit light with glee;
That I must wander through the world all friendless and forlorn,
Unsolaced by affection's smile—the thing of shame and scorn.
Those mournful tones! those dirge-like tones! what tearful tales they tell!
For sorrow's ever in the sound of the sad prison bell.
How oft, when some bright vision of the days of olden time
Comes o'er me, like an angel-dream from heaven's own hallowed clime,
And beautiful and holy things—the bright stars and the flowers,
And childhood's pray'r—seem dear to me as in life's sinless hours;
How oft, too, when in such sweet dreams, I wander by the side
Of one fair form whom virtue might have won me for a bride—

They come, those tones so terrible, those drear tones through
my cell,
And mem'ry shuddereth to hear the harsh-toned prison bell.
That bell; what voiceless anguish to the captive it imparts,
As suddenly from some sweet dream of love and home he
starts!
And many are the scalding tears its tones have caused to
flow;
For the wicked weep in sceret o'er the burden of their woe.
'Tis also sadly heard by some strange struggling beings who
Cling to the false and evil, whilst they love the good and true.
And some—a few—all innocent, who've learnt, alas! too
well,
That man's best judgment sometimes errs, may weep to hear
that bell.
I've heard it when bright memories have crowded to my
brain,
When hopes and aspirations high have, beckoning, come
again;
And it hath sought to crush each thought that fain would
save from ill,
As wildly it has chanted forth, "Despair, be evil still."
But no! a prison oft hath proved a holy place of yore,
And if the heart yearns for the good, God will the good
restore.
Then courage, soul! let faith's bright beams grief's dark-
some shades dispel,
And days of joy may yet be thine far from the prison bell.

O. H. SUFFOLK.

VERSES,

COMPOSED ON BOARD THE HULK "PRESIDENT," ON HEARING A CHILD PLAYING ON THE DECK.

Thou sinless and sweet one—thy voice is a strain
Which yields solace to sadness, and balm to my pain,
From thy unsullied spirit it comes to me here,
Like the music of Eden—soft, holy, and clear.
The storm-stirring thoughts o'er my heart holding sway,
At the charm of its gentleness vanish away!
For its melody, teeming with gladness and love,
Seems the song of the seraph to lure me above.
Beautiful prattler!—that music of mirth,
Yet unchecked by the cares and the sorrows of earth,
Mingles strangely where anguish and wretchedness reign,
With the sigh of the captive, and clank of his chain.
Yet I love to hear it, though captive I be,
Gushing pure from thy young heart all joyous and free.
There's a siren-like sweetness pervading its song,
Which can woo me to virtue, and win me from wrong.
Play on, then—play on, then—for thou dost not know
What it is to be wretched and burdened with woe:
There's the fair world around thee, and blue sky above,
Ever seeming to breathe on thee beauty and love;
And the waters that flash in the sun's golden beams,
Dance beneath thee as bright as thine own fairy dreams;
Yet here there are hearts sunk in ruin and crime,
Which once was as gleesome and guiltless as thine.
Beware! then—beware!—when seducingly gay
Vice, with counterfeit smiles, would beguile thee away
From the good and the lovely, from virtue and joy,
To the pleasures of sin, which debase and destroy.
Those holy emotions and pure thoughts which dwell
In the bosom of childhood—oh, cherish them well!

For if there's a true joy this world can impart,
It surely exists in the innocent heart.
Though remorse wring my soul, and though care clothe
my brow,
I once was as sinless and joyous as thou ;
And knelt, too, like thee, by a fond mother's chair
With tiny hands folded in faith-hallowed pray'r.
Play on, my sweet child ! there's a penitent tear
Stealing down my wan cheek as I list to thee here;
There's a prayer in my heart to the Wise One above
To be made like a child in belief and in love.
O ever when gladly this gay world would win
With its tinselled allurements thy young heart to sin,
Turn away from the light of its illusive glare,
And seek in temptation the refuge of pray'r.
Uncorrupted in heart and a stranger to woe,
With the garland of love green and bright on thy brow,
May'st thou journey through life and thy voice still retain
Its heav'n-given sweetness to soothe grief and pain.

O. H. Suffolk.

"We confess our inability to solve the riddle of this man's character. Infinite wisdom only knows the weakness of his moral courage or the strength of his hypocrisy. What our penal system can do for such a man, we need not inquire; one thing is certain, and that is that our social system must cast him out somewhere. We cannot carry the subject further."

CHAPTER XIII.

A FRIEND IN PRISON—AN HONOURABLE RELEASE—A BATHURST BULLY BUFFETTED FOR HIS FAULTS—CLOUDS BREAK—RESOLVES—FIRST EMPLOYMENT—IDENTIFICATION—THUNDER-STORM IN THE BUSH—ELUDES AN OLD TRAPPER—FOUNDS NEW STATIONS—ENCOUNTERS WITH BLACKS—SNIPE.

As THESE masters of the thieving art thought the young, strong, free immigrant—for here we have to speak of Struilby in the *third* person—might yet want its resources, or as, perhaps, they wished for his admiration, or to kill time, they opened up many of the mysteries of the profound profession, which, after all, had proved so profitless to themselves, as their condition then showed. He generally heard in silence, and in his heart despised their unmanly, vile ways, and indicated better. They all appeared to think him a good fellow, but of utterly old ideas, and very unhandy. There was one man, called Green, who said least in the circle, but sometimes talked to Struilby apart. He was a rather thriving stockholder, but had been a government man, and was then imprisoned on an unproven charge of aiding and abetting bush-

rangers. He was soon liberated, and interested himself for Struilby. In less than seven weeks an order came from Sydney for Lawrence Struilby's instant liberation, and the Sydney solicitor offered, at his own risk, to prosecute his employer for false imprisonment. Struilby objected, as he hated litigation, and did not wish it to be known that he had been imprisoned. Besides, he knew the powerful magisterial influence his late master could enlist against an immigrant. He resolved to get his things at the publican's and bid adieu to Bathurst. And, just as he was dismissed, he heard that his prosecutor and late master had died of apoplexy; this determined Struilby to leave.

When he, in poor enough plight, went to the publican for his clothes, he was told some one had come from him with authority to open his box; and, when it was produced, behold, it was rifled of all its valuables! Altercation ensued between him and the publican, who, being a powerful man, told Lawrence he would kick him off his premises if he did not disappear in five minutes. Lawrence had greatly failed in flesh since he entered the prison, and he felt this; but all his wrongs seemed like fire to go through him from head to foot, and he challenged the son of Anak to pitched battle in his own yard. Two or three stockmen who were drinking, shouted, "Bravo, stranger;" and to the arbitrement of nature's arms the quarrel was

brought in the yard. The stockmen fairly seconded Lawrence, and did him justice amid his antagonist's friends. He had sense enough to drink nothing before the battle; and, as he saw his foe was in a rage, he resolved to let him expend his strength. No man in Lawrence's native parish could stand before him with the fists, and being left-handed and wary, few men anywhere could fight him when thoroughly at himself. At first it appeared as if the publican would have "levelled him like a sack of chaff." He did catch one or two awkward blows about the face; but, before forty minutes, the unwieldly publican, beaten fearfully on the chest and ribs, came with all his weight to the ground, and was carried doubling and breathless into his house. The stockmen offered to treat Lawrence to rum, but he heartily thanked them for their honour and kindness to a stranger, and gathering up his few traps in a pocket-handkerchief, evening though it was, put more than seven miles between him and Bathurst before dark. He had time for reflection ere he reached lodging for the night. As his brows cooled in the evening air his heart became very sad. Nature seemed the contrast of his frame; for she was calm and sweet, and he was bitter and perturbed. He was glad he was out of prison; he was glad he had punished the vile hypocritical robber, who had plundered his box, of his books, and

his clothes. But he remembered that uncle Jemmy had spoken of fighting as being unmanly and bull-doggish, and he did not feel proud of his victory. Now he had come to the crisis of his life, with no friend but God, whom, alas, he had too much neglected. But he would commit himself to Him and do nothing wrong. He got lodging and food freely given at a sheep-station that night; and next day, albeit, one outward eye was not so bright as the other; his inward eye was more clear, and his heart more calm. He made for the "new country;" and as he strode through the bush and thought of home, an occasional tear dropped on his path. His mother was praying for him, and God heard prayer. The sights and sounds of free and lovely nature insinuated calmness into his soul. Youth and hope were strong in him. He ventured to pray, and before noon that day hope was singing clear in Struilby's heart. He felt seven years older and wiser for those seven weeks' imprisonment. He resolved to turn a new leaf, to trust far less to others, and more to God and to himself in future; *and, above all, to do nothing wrong.* Blessed hope! Though not in the words of Redwold to the fallen Edwin of Deira, hope in effect said to Struilby's heart:—

"Prosperity, like the swallow comes and goes:
To-day there is the ruinous clay and straw;

To-morrow sweetest twitterings fill the eaves.
The wretch plunged knee-deep in the whirling drift
Cannot believe in summer, yet it comes
With all its singing birds. Remember, time
Works often to some fair accomplishment,
Which we impatient, purblind cannot see,
And in our eagerness stretch forth a hand,
And that one act mars all."

Whether it was that the wide horizon and bright sky were such a contrast to Bathurst prison, or that the springs of his constitutional hopefulness recoiled after long pressure, or that he was now conscious of possessing experience that would ensure future success, or whether some touch were given his heart from the spirit world, certain it is that since he left home he never experienced greater gladness, or was so firmly resolved that his friends should have a good account of him. The horizon of life seemed to widen and brighten before him; but he knew God helps them that help themselves, and he resolved to work and save from henceforth with a vigour and perseverance greater than hitherto. In the words of Edwin's reply, he might have said:—

"I have been taught
The world is nothing but a mass of means,
We have but what we make, that every good
Is locked by nature in a granite hand,
Sheer labour must unclinch."

This lesson colonial life had already taught, and it was worth all he had paid for it. Unhappily, he then formed a wrong resolution amid many right ones. He resolved not to write home lugubrious letters, or any letter, till he should have something cheering to state. On the evening of his second day's journey, when he came to the Vale Inn, his whole stock of cash was not over fifteen pence; but he held an independent look, as he knew he could pay for some bread and beef, and have a drink of water, and sleep in the bush. To his surprise, he saw among the smokers a well-known face looking inquiringly at him. It was Green, formerly his fellow-prisoner, who saluted him with a nod; but, still smoking, and at intervals talking to his companions, who dealt freely in nobblers of rum. After dinner on damper and tea, Green asked him out, and, in a voice more soft and kind than Struilby supposed Green capable of, the latter asked him what he ntended to do? and gave him advice about "the new country." Then, drawing from his pocket a roll of cheques and notes, he took out several, and told Struilby to take them; and, if convenient, to pay him again, but if not it was not the slightest matter. This touched the heart of the needy young man; but, in a firm tone, he thanked Green, and told him he would not, and could not have it. Green said, "You *need* it. I believe in money; it

helps a fellow to hold up his head. Five pounds now are nothing to me. Take it and pay, or don't, as suits you. You're a brick, but a soft one; you're getting baked." Lawrence firmly refused, but with glowing gratitude. Green then took out one pound, and throwing it at Struilby's feet, swore if the latter did not lift it, he never should. Struilby did lift it; and it helped him on his journey in a direction where his friend assured him he would find work enough. That act of kindness Struilby never forgot. It helped to redeem human nature, or rather, colonial human nature, in his estimation, and taught him to do similar acts to others.

Without stopping more than a night by the way, he went right down through Bathurst county, crossing the head-waters of the Belabula, an affluent of the Lachlan. The latter river he crossed from Bathurst into Monteagle, proceeding beyond the boundary of location, within the Lachlan district. There he thought he might be employed in overseeing or forming new cattle stations in the "new country," where squatters were advancing between the Murrumbridge and Lachlan. At Burrangong, one hundred and twenty miles southwest from Bathurst, he found the first job he undertook, or to use his own words in describing it afterwards—"There I first drew bridle at Jim Black's, an old convict, whose father had been

hanged and his two brothers transported for life. He was himself an infidel and an old bachelor. He was affable enough though, and wanted a man to mow wild oats. He had two English convict servants engaged, and they mowed Mooney, a south of Ireland man, out of the field. I engaged at ten shillings an acre; and it was evident they intended to treat me as they did Mooney. We went to it with a will, but as my strength was then returning, they soon found it wiser to take things more easily. In fact I drove them on till I could have cut right inside of them. When Mooney saw this, he positively leaped like a black, and boasted that 'thim Inglish coults were broke in by a boy from the ould country.' While at Black's an unpleasant thing befel me. In my box in Bathurst I lost my certificate of free immigration, and as my clothing was rather scant and my swag so light, one day a policeman came and told me it was rumoured I was an escaped convict, and I must get certified as a free immigrant. The policeman treated me as respectfully as I could wish. No one nearer than a Mr. Bermad could identify me; so off I set for forty miles to his house. He was a shipmate of mine, and took me in to dinner, in poor trim though I was, and treated me as respectfully as if I had been a magistrate. He gave me an identification; and next day sent a black to escort me to Burrangong.

I fear some wished I should not return. I suspected them of putting the police on my trail. But I did return, though with difficulty. The black and I slept in the bush; and a most frightful storm of thunder, lightning, and rain came on. It grew piercingly cold. As the peal would burst sharp over us, the black, who called God Miki, would cry 'Cobon Miki, got it powder.' When the rain began to pour, he stripped off all his rags and rolled them up. I did so too, for so you shun cold by wet clothes. The black would, from time to time, utter a loud cur-r-r-r-rh and say, 'You always like it that—that make cobon bell wallen tumble down.' I could not see how it prevented rain.

I soon discovered my employer's system of proceeding—that what men earned in the week, he got them to drink on Sunday, he selling the rum. But I had made my resolve and kept to it. So, when I was leaving him, I drew a cheque for clear fifteen pounds. I hated his entrapping ways, so like the devil's, and I hated his infidelity and profanity. His practice refuted his arguments. He appeared to have no joy but gathering pelf; his soul and body seemed a rickle of dry bones. He was very fond of horse-racing; and, as he was notoriously rich, he never would bet less on a horse than a hundred pounds. He more than once staked a thousand. He often played cards with his men for money, and generally won. He disliked

me because I would not drink, or play cards, or work on Sunday. When the men used to gather round the fire, he was fond of telling his early history. He was a gipsy. His mother used to teach him, when a mere child, to creep out of the bag in which he was carried on her back, to beg from passengers. She would say aloud to him, 'Why do you trouble that nice gentleman?' but, in an under tone, 'Mung pala, mung'—beg on, beg on. His father was a famous horse-stealer, and got hanged for stealing eleven horses from one man. He himself would have been hanged for the like offence, but that his sister went round with a petition, and got the gentry and farmers to sign it on his behalf. In remembrance of this, he sent her £100 a-year for life. He used especially to enjoy one act of his father's cleverness. The old gipsy had resolved to steal a famous horse, worth a hundred pounds, only he wanted the tail. Long before he stole him, he made an artificial tail and put it on when he stole him. In a distant fair he sold him to a gentleman as a saddle-horse for his lady. The gentleman paid him, and he went for a pen and ink to write a receipt; in the meantime saying, 'Just stand with this gentleman, who as a stranger has acted as valuator.' This stranger was his son, who narrated it. When he did not return the stranger feigned surprise, and feared he was an old cheat. The gentleman took his

lady to look at the horse. She knew the points, and approved him much; but, lifting his tail, it came off in her hand, leaving a short shorn stump! She threw it into her lap and burst into tears. Her husband looked stupid. The stranger, after cursing the old cheat, retired to laugh and admire his father's masterpiece of art.

From him I went to as opposite a man as could be. Old Mr. Meals had a cattle station at Carowder, and I went to him as overseer. He was a free immigrant, very gentlemanly and kind, but almost a cripple. He took a great liking to me, and had me to eat and drink at his table. He asked my advice about every thing; and always had me with him when he could. I really loved him as a friend—almost as my father. With him I had leave to keep cattle for myself. With my wages, and a little previous saving, I acquired some stock; and tried to increase it as fast as I could in honesty. I soon got acquainted with the country round by riding after cattle and conversing with stockmen, who had gone far out after stray cattle, or who had taken mobs of fat bullocks to Melbourne. Mr. Meals gave me leave to form several new stations, for which I got twenty-five pounds each. Forming a station implied finding water and run, putting up split rail fence for stock-yard, and a hut or two for stock-man and hut-man. At one of these

new stations I had some rather exciting encounters with blacks. I always treated them with kindness, but to show the white feather to a black is to make him your master and bully. I formed a station for a Mr. C——r, where there was a rather warlike tribe, and a principal man among them—not the chief—was called Snipe. They were like the dog in the manger, snarling at white fellows using pasturage, which they themselves only grazed with a few stray kangaroos. Indeed they were like wolves among our sheep. I shunned them as much as possible. One day I had followed some cattle through the bush up a wooded gully, and found myself brought up before a waterfall; and right around me in the bush, were the tribe of blacks. I had no arms at the time. I looked boldly at Snipe, and said in the mixed lingo of English and Warragera, 'Make a light white fellow there—ayama policeman along yarraman,'—that is, see there's a white man—look at the policeman on his horse. Snipe said, 'Bell, white fellow—no white man;' but all looked, and as they did, I dashed my horse into the bush, and I heard the boomerangs cutting the branches, and the spears shot in all directions; but I escaped untouched. Only for the ruse I never should have left that gully alive. One night afterwards I heard strange noises not far from the hut. I went out and found a fine young horse driven into a pool and stuck

fast, and the blacks around him. How to get him out, or get away from them, unarmed as I was, I did not know. The horse-rope was near, so I lifted it, and with a bold tone, as if plenty of help were near, said, 'You, Snipe, go along with black fellow, get out him yarraman.' He shook his head and said, 'Bell yarraman move.' I lifted my hand and hit him a sound slap on the jowl, and, as he staggered, repeated my orders. As submissive as a child Snipe took the rope, and they drew out the horse. I gave them, of course, an ample reward of damper and beef. He appeared to take the slap as kindly from me as one of his gins would have taken it from himself. Had I cowered they would have certainly eaten the horse, possibly myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

LAWRENCE FINDS IN THE BUSH "AN HELP MEET FOR HIM"—LOVE IS LAVISH EVERYWHERE OF IDEAL JEWELLERY — KINDNESS TO A TRUE-HEARTED SON OF ABRAHAM REWARDED — STRUILBY'S FLOCK INCREASES.

STRUILBY'S home-loving heart was often lonely in the bush; and, among companions with whose coarse feelings and manners he had no sympathy, he sighed for other fellowship. On one of his cattle-seeking expeditions, he visited a settler some twenty miles distant, and there he saw, for the first time, Selina Price. She was niece of the owner of the station. She was just sweet sixteen; had been residing in Sydney with a well-to-do uncle for some time, and had got a better education than most females residing so far up-country. She had come to the colony when about four years of age, and knew bush-life and habits well. She was, moreover, if not beautiful, very good-looking, exceedingly active and vivacious—to the verge of restlessness, and full of girlish frolic. Struilby was full ten years her senior, and of much more sober and thoughtful temperament; but love, like

dreams, often goes by contraries. Discords are needed to connubial harmonies; opposites are the attractions and complements of each other there. Whirlwinds—wedding whirlwinds would wreck homes; but the blending of gales and zephyrs gives a refreshing breeze. Whatever was the cause of it, Struilby, when he saw, loved Selina Price. It is not the object of this narrative to enter deeply into affairs of the heart which are, and should be, strictly private affairs, or we might tell of Struilby's doubtings whether such a young and charming girl would have a husband so much older, coarser, and duller than herself. It is true, he was not yet twenty-eight, and had always been considered well-built and good-looking, and a first-rate hand at writing a poetic love-letter. His first visit evidently was not displeasing to the lady or her uncle, and subsequent ones were evidently agreeable to all parties. In fact, his heart palpitated more than ever it did, in those tentative visits till the prize was won and they were engaged. Then he felt he had a prize indeed! Perhaps, like other lovers, he threw the radiance of his own beaming soul around the object of his affections, and his imagination heightened the virtues on which it dwelt. However deficient the bush was in jewellery, his ideality was an exhaustless mine of gems to be lavished on Selina. He could scarce imagine any good in

woman-kind that he did not see in her, either in bud or flower. And the lover's ideal estimate is, no doubt, more strictly correct than is a cold prosaic philosophy; for no figures can adequately depicture the value of woman, absolutely or relatively; nowhere is she so indispensable as in the solitudes of the bush. Selina Price, though not "a help meet" for a dancing-master, suited Lawrence Struilby. She could handle a fowling-piece almost as well as he could; she could ride better; she was quick and witty, full of resource, and loved him without a rival; she was to him the dawn of a new day. Morning began to spread on the mountains. All his ideality and domesticity awoke, kindling the skies of his future life with gorgeous colours, as bright as hope after struggle and despondence. He felt a new man; and, galloping round the run to look after his own and his employer's cattle, he felt as if his horse participated in his joy, and hope sang like a lark in the brightening dawn. Now he had a motive to work with all his might, and his heart beamed through his countenance, and nerved his arm. Wonderful arrangement of God!—that flowers and hearts only reach full bloom on the verge of marriage union!

Perhaps his happy feelings made Struilby all the kinder to an itinerant Jewish merchant who then called at his station. Jehiel Myres had come from London to Australia to make

money, and with dray and merchandize was itinerating the bush. The son of Abraham came to Struilby, who treated him with a frankness and hospitality that he seldom received at Gentile hands. He had his horse put into a fat paddock; he gave him rations as much as he needed, and sent word to several stations of the arrival of his goods and wares. In consequence of this he sold more than a hundred pounds' worth before he left Carowder. When he was leaving he offered to pay Struilby anything he asked. He, however, would take nothing; and the grateful Myers said, "Then, a thousand words would not fill a bushel; but, as I am a true Jew, if I can ever do you a kindness I will do it." As Struilby was allowed the produce of his own cattle, he in a few months took down a load of cheese to Yass to sell it. He went round several shops, and was about to sell, when up came to him his friend Myers, running in hot haste, and shook him by the hand. He inquired the most he could get for his cheese, and was told. "Then," said the Jew, "I'll give you a penny a pound for it more than any other man in Yass will give." At this rate he bought, and paid for it, and compelled Struilby to be his guest; and hardly could he have treated Abraham himself with greater hospitality. Struilby did not till then know he had settled in Yass. While he remained with Myres, the latter came to him,

and said, "There is a flock of cattle come in, that you ought to buy; they would set you up for yourself on a new station." Struilby dissented, as he had not money. The Jew drew out a roll of notes, and said, "Go and buy them, and use as much of that as you like. *I* do not know how much is in it, so help me God! but you will pay me at your leisure." Struilby refused; but the other vehemently urged. He yielded to generosity that was evidently sincere, and beyond any he had ever experienced before from either Jew or Gentile. In due time, from the increase of the cattle, he paid the principal, and the Jew would not receive one penny of interest.

In less than six months after Struilby and Selina Price first meet, they were married in the parish church of Yass. Two parties of ladies and gentlemen—the friends of the bride and bridegroom—set out with them, in high glee, to ride about one hundred and twenty miles through the bush to the church. They were all in the best of health and spirits, and splendidly mounted; and after spending the night at the half-way-house inn, by noon of the second day they reached their destination. Myres came to Struilby, and requested him to give the preparation of the wedding-dinner to his friend Moses Moses. Consent was given; and perhaps so fine and so cheap a wedding dinner had never before been given in the

Lachlan district. Servants in livery waited, and the best viands and wines loaded the board. The little Jewish community vied with each other in kindness to the Gentile, who had so hospitably treated one of their number when a stranger in the wilderness.

There was no newspaper reporter to give account of the dress of squatteresses, or the eloquence of squatters, at that dinner; but the absence of a reporter did not lessen the praises lavished, on the honour, heartiness, and strength of Struilby, or on the beauty and accomplishments of his bride.

After their wedding tour in Yass, Struilby and his wife returned to Carowder, and were most kindly received by their friends around. The hearty kindness and hospitality of squatting neighbours, who to visit each other must ride fifteen, twenty, or perhaps sixty miles, is something far more true and intense than formal visiting in cities, where visits are so frequent, that friends are "not at home" to each other. These rides and festivities were more pleasant than anything Struilby had experienced since he left his home in Ireland, or expected ever to experience till he reached that home again. With the leave of his employer, Mr. Meals, he now undertook to form a new and distant station for the overgrown flocks of Gipsy Black.

In this serious undertaking, which so nearly cost the life of himself and his young wife, he embarked with a view to pasturage for his own increasing stock. If the man of capital finds that money makes money; the grazier finds that cattle increase cattle. He had embarked his wages in stock, which was increasing like Jacob's flocks of old. Although he did not marry cattle but a wife; his wife brought him more than three hundred pounds worth of fine young cows and heifers. He was too poor yet, however, to stock a station for himself; and they both resolved by industry, economy, and enterprise to work their way to an establishment of their own.

In pursuit of this, Struilby undertook his mission for Gipsy Jim to the Murray river.

CHAPTER XV.

STRUILBY UNDERTAKES A PASTORAL EXPEDITION TO THE MURRAY RIVER—THINGS THAT MADE MITTA MITTA NO PARADISE—HELP TO A LOST WAYFARER—MRS. STRUILBY DESCRIBES THE BLACK BOY BOBINDI—THE UNWELCOME VISIT OF A CANIBAL BLACK—THE ATTACK OF THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS' BLACKS—THE SAD END OF BOBINDI.

"In September, 1842," (the spring of the year,) says Struilby, "I undertook to form a station for my first employer, Jim Black, of Burrangong. He was very wealthy. He had untold money in the funds. He had a wild herd of more than five hundred swine; after which we used to have splendid boar hunts. He had on his stations in the new country eight thousand head of prime cattle, more than one thousand head of horses, and between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand sheep. At one time he had £40,000 worth of wool in his sheds. His merino sheep, first introduced by John McArthur, were famous for the finest wool. His

horses became enormously valuable when the export of horses to India commenced in 1844. I am not theologian enough to know whether the devil be very fond of money, (as the love of it is the root of all evil, I suppose he is,) but the man most like him, that I ever knew, was fond of it. Though Gipsy Jim had, for stealing many horses, escaped hanging, by a mere hair's breadth, yet I have heard him say he would hang, if he could, any man who should steal a sheep, or an old shoe from himself. He was selfishness and revenge embodied and petrified. He wanted outlet for his flocks and herds, and in 1842 engaged me, with the consent of my permanent employer, Mr. Meals, to form a new station for him on the Murray, for the sum of £50, besides being found in every thing and feeding my own stock on the new run. He had heard of it from a stockman, who had passed over it returning from Melbourne; which town had been founded five years before. Had I known the exasperated state of the Murray river blacks, or the nature of the pasturage on the intended station, I should neither have taken my own cattle to it, nor undertaken his for double the money. I was not then aware of the attack on Mr. Inman and the slaughter of his thousand sheep by the Murray blacks, nor of the murder of Mr. Martin, and the narrow escape of Mr. Langhorne and his

party.* Selina and Bobindi accompanied me, as well as a stockman, hut keeper and bullock driver, with rations. Six good dogs did most of the work of driving. We swam the Murrumbridge and Murray rivers with the loss of only two or three head of heifers, and after crawling over about two hundred and seventy miles of country, arrived at the site of our station in three weeks. It lay between the Mitta Mitta and Ovens rivers, both being branches of the Murray. It was situated to the north-west of the Burrangong mountains or Australian alps, the highest of which, Kuskiusko, (which is about six thousand five hundred feet high—the highest point in New Holland,) was visible in very clear days. So was Mount Tombo. Mount Gibbo was generally visible, covered with snow much of the year. The range to which it belonged, and which rose close behind us, was called by the natives the Bugong mountains, because the black alluvial soil of the valleys abounds with the bugong or locusts' caterpillar. These locusts, in vast swarms, deposit their eggs in the soil; and they produce great white grubs, which the natives dig up, and on which they grow fat.

* The deeply interesting account of these colonial incidents may be found by the reader in the despatches of Governor Grey to Lord John Russel and Lord Stanley in 1841, given in the appendix of the Aborigines' Friend, or, Colonial Intelligence. It will there be seen with what desperate courage and perseverance the natives fought and defeated an armed expedition of regulars and volunteers. At the same time will be read with satisfation the great forbearance, humanity, and wisdom of Governor Grey.

Unhappily, they are not content with this delicacy at first hand; for when a gin proves unfaithful she is driven into these mountains to fatten, and at the end of the year is speared and eaten. A stockman, called Hume, assured me he knew such an execution and feast to take place at Talamata, not far from our station. The river Mitta Mitta takes its name from the marshes (Mitta Mitta—marsh marsh), through which it flows. One of these, five miles long, lay on the side of the river opposite our hut. It was separated from another of about three miles long by a sand-dyke or bar. We crossed the first with a dray and load of a ton weight; and so firm was the sward it sprung like india rubber. We built a hut, which I had loop-holed, so that we could turn it into a garrison, and by removing the wooden stoppers from the loop-holes, could fire on all sides. We also cleared away all timber for several roods round, so that no enemy could lie in ambush. The hut stood on a beautiful rising ground about forty yards from the winter banks of the river. Here we made a garden for vegetables, the seeds of which we had brought with us. So adapted was the sandy alluvial soil that, I believe, Egypt never grew better leeks, onions, melons, or pumpkins. The equal of the latter, I do not think Pharaoh or Joseph ever ate. They would vine out forty or fifty yards, and produce piles of fruit, which

we laid up for the winter. Using them constantly with meat, I found a most admirable preventive to indigestion and other diseases produced by living on a purely animal diet. Australians eat too much animal food and too little vegetable. The suitability of the climate for large watery fruits appears a provision of nature to remedy this. The mountain scenery behind, the river and wide plains and forest in front, would have made Mitta Mitta a paradise, but for the lack of salt-bush and miall and boree for the cattle. The swampy grass was sour and harsh. I warned Black of this, and parted with my own cattle, but he would persevere. The blacks also hindered the paradisiacal character of our new station. (Though some think Adam and Eve were black.) They early showed themselves hostile, not so much to us as to our black boy, Bobindi, who was not of their tribe, and who broke all their traditional laws by his intrusion. They were the Snowy Mountains' blacks, and spoke a different language from the Lachlan tribe. They became very bold and intrusive. One day, as a line of them were standing in a threatening attitude between the door and the river, I was very much inclined to give them a couple of barrels of swan shot; but justice and prudence, speaking through Selina, forbade.

About three months after coming to the station, at which I remained ten months in all, I one day

went out and saw a man standing by a tree on the river side, not far from our house. I thought he was a black, and went back for my gun before I approached him. He was a white man, naked as he was born, except a tattered blanket around him. His face was black and shaggy with dirt and hair. To make his story short, it was this. He was a magistrate of the Oomeo country, on the other side of Mount Gibbo. He started to cross the mountain with flocks to sell in Melbourne, left his men to follow with rations and the cattle, knocked up his horse on the sharp rocks, lost his way, had finished all his food, was torn naked by the scrub, and utterly exhausted; after fourteen days of it, he stood at the tree, afraid to come in where he knew there was a white woman. I brought him in and dressed and fed him. Next day we mounted my stock-horses, and, with rations for his men, ascended Gibbo; and after a day and a night of terrible toil, we met them ascending the other side, hungry and worn. We picked up his splendid mare in the mountain, and rested the men and cattle at my station. I never saw a man more grateful for help. He asked me the price of the rations. I felt rather hurt, and said,—"Nothing." "Then," said he, pointing to some nine heifers that were rather foot-sore, "I'll take *nothing* for them or my mare." I had to accept them; and they proved a splendid accession to my little store.

The mare I kept for years—one of the finest brood mares in the colony. It is a mean thing to do a kindness with the hope of return. Indeed, it then ceases to be a *kindness* at all, and is only an informal bargain; yet, if it be true that curses are fowls that always fly home to roost, (a raven though may stay away, when like Noah's it lights on carion,) it is also true of good turns. They not only deserve, but generally, sooner or later, receive other good turns; and sometimes they are doves that, though they fly away singly, come back in pairs or even in flocks.

On this station I met a man who had seen Buckley, the escaped convict, who lived with the blacks thirty-five years, and, when he was retaken, was a chief, with two wives and many children, and could hardly recall a sentence of English. He was a powerful man, and could beat any of the blacks at their own weapons. Buckley averred he saw Miss Lord as the wife of a chief, with two children. She was of a most respectable family in Van Dieman's Land; was wrecked between Illawara and Twofold Bay, and fell into the hands of the blacks. Though she cut her name on trees, her family, in all their searching, never could find her. I never could discover a trace of her in these parts.

There was fine fishing on the Mitta Mitta; but I wanted a canoe for fishing, fowling, and convey-

ance of stores across. A great blue gum had been fired by some means on the side of the river. It fell and split right down into equal parts. By lighting a fire in one of them and adzing it out, I formed a canoe thirty feet long, five wide, and two and a-half deep. It was the finest bark (literally *bark*) ever launched on the Mitta Mitta. It was most pleasant for Selina, Bobindi, and myself to sit in it of evenings and haul up fish as fast as lines could lift them. While I was making it an awkward circumstance occurred. A black and his lubra (Kuntungera dialect for gin or woman*) came into the hut where Selina was alone. The savage came forward and felt her neck and arm, which were quite to his mind as a tender joint. He grinned, while she gasped. He jabbered to his lubra, who utterly opposed killing the white lubra. Had Selina shouted, it would have brought on the silence of instant death. She gasped "boombilly, boombilly,"—tobacco, and brought a peace-offering of the weed. Just at that stage of the proceedings the black caught sight of me coming in from the river, with the adze over my arm. He glided away, and his wife lingered behind. When I went in I found Selina pale as death, and unable to speak. I ran to the bed-room for my gun, which

* Colonel Mundy, in "Our Antipodes," derives "gin" from the Greek gune—woman. I think an equal stretch of etymological fancy might derive *lubra* from the Latin *mulier*—woman.—Ed.

I kept behind a sheet of bark, leant against the wall. I would have been in time to give the savage the contents of a barrel, but Selina begged me, for mercy's sake, not to do so. Had the savage, while prowling about, got my gun, I should have been in a pretty fix. I felt grateful to God that he had protected me from the spear of the foe, while I was intent on my canoe, and still more grateful that I did not find my wife a corpse. After this, for months, the blacks did not make their appearance; and I thought they were gone, or had given us up. This led me into a mistake which was nearly the most fatal blunder of my life.

Swans, in the hot months, abounded on the river; for they then came in from the dry lagoons to the water. Along the river, up towards the Snowy Mountains, you would find the finest water-fowl shooting in the world, I think. Ducks of all kinds, teal and native companions (a great large crane), geese and swans abounded in flocks; and, best of all, an unlicensed sportsman had not to skulk from water-bailiffs or game-keepers. What a pity that crack shots, who have no room at home, would not come here, where they might blaze away, bagging something better than snipe or tomtits? Along the river you would see the great high-piled stick nests of the swans, so built on branches that they could rise or fall with the river.

Their eggs were large and good; but very hard to get at, on account of the thorny scrub, the many serpents that infested them, and the deep water-holes over which they were built. I shot scores of swans; as, out of the fine white azure under-feathers or down, Selina made boas and muffs as presents for friends. But she herself will tell you some things of which you ask."

"On the whole," (writes Mrs. Struilby,) "our time at Mitta Mitta was not unpleasantly spent. We had constant occupation with the cattle; in the management of which we were greatly helped by our dogs, and by our little black boy that we had adopted before leaving the Lachlan district. The dogs of Australia are wonderful animals, of some of them, an interesting history might be written. They are the great pets of stockmen, and the theme of their conversation in bush yarns. A neighbour of ours on the Lachlan, Steevy Winner, had one which he believed 'far wiser nor any christin' and far better able to tail cattle and know his master's wishes about them. His name was 'old man,' and Steevy often refused ten guineas for him. He would not have taken twenty; and when he was leaving the colony, a man who knew his value travelled a hundred miles to steal him from his purchaser, and then forwarded his price. We had on the Murray a dog we called 'Rattler;' and I should be

afraid of not being believed if I told all his perfections. He used to come to the door and lie there watching for the signal, which, when he got, he would bound off searching through the bush for miles for the milking cows, and never would return till he found them, and driving them before him rushed them into the river swimming after them. Then he would put them into the stock-yard and lie before the gate, till some one would close it. This he did every morning, and when he saw they were safely closed in, then he would bound home and stand at the door wagging his tail till his breakfast was taken to him. The cattle on first coming to a station are taught to gather at noon under some clump of trees, which is called their camp. It is wonderful how either horses or cows will form the habit of punctually coming to their camp. Well, a wave of your hand in the direction of any camp, and a few words spoken, and Rattler would be off without horseman or footman with him, and bring home the wild cattle to the camp.

"You request me to give some account of the black boy, Bobindi. He was of the New South Wales blacks and of the Yeo Yeo tribe. You know the blacks dare not trespass on each other's grounds. This is one reason they die out so fast; for they cannot go back over each other's grounds; and so melt away before the whites. If the Murray or Victoria natives got a New South

Wales black on their territory, they would either at once kill and eat him, or split him up and take his caul fat and leave him to die. Bobindi's father and mother had died in measles; and he, when a mere child, was left to an old grandmother. We got him about seven years old, and had him between three and four years. When he came to us he was a poor, shrunken, pot-bellied creature. He was also very filthy and quite naked. He soon became plump and good-looking and very active. He was coal black, with good features, and of remarkably expressive eyes. Blacks often have a presentiment of death, and will travel a hundred miles or more to die and be buried in some favourite spot. Bobindi's grandmother had grown old and gray, and had such a presentiment. With many tears and bitter cries, she brought the child to Lawrence, and entreated him to make him his pickaninny; for of all creatures, orphan children among the blacks are most miserable, poor, despised, ill-fed dwarflings. He could not refuse, and so adopted him, when the poor old woman went to die. We had him washed thoroughly with soap and water, and had his hair cut and his head cleansed. Cutting the hair of children is no easy operation, when performed by a black gin. I knew an old gin and little black boy to be left in charge of the camp; she too old to grub up roots or catch game, and he too young. I heard the

boy crying for nearly two hours; and on going to the camp to find out the cause, to my astonishment I saw a little heap of hair and the old woman sawing away at a large tuft, with a piece of an old rusty iron hoop. She did not cut it, of course, but tore it out by the roots all the time. Her consolation to him was 'You saucy debil, what for nimbly when Mine make it buggery wool jump up'—why did he cry when she was cutting his hair so nicely. I think her sight must have been bad. As Bobindi never had worn a rag in his life till he came to us, we had to accustom him to clothing by degrees. Shortly after we got him, he was one day standing smartly clad in a nice blue-striped calico shirt, but without trowsers. A newly-arrived immigrant girl looked in and said to her mother, "O mother there is the devil." She had never seen a black before. Bobindi looked at her, and with great indignation said—"No not *me* devil; but you most liked devil." He was very quiet, affectionate, and truthful. When we came to Mitta Mitta Lawrence had a nice garden formed on the bank of the river, where we grew hundred weights of melons and pumpkins, many of them between forty and fifty pounds. Onions and peas also as well as potatoes were excellent. I suspected Bobindi for pilfering the peas. As blacks have a great terror of Devil-devil (for in *him* they all believe) I resolved to put Bobindi to the ordeal.

I made the stockman go and put on an old sheet, put a chain round him, get on a paper mask, and come into the hut rattling the chain. Bobindi was in great terror and drew up behind me in a corner. I asked Devil-devil 'did he see any one stealing my peas?' He replied, in a deep hoarse voice, — 'Bobindi.' I shall never forget with what desperate manhood the little fellow's eyes flashed, as if the devil were doing him an injustice, he said, 'Now, by ——, Mitter Devil, you *know* you lie; for mine took one pea, only one, belonging to Mittiss.' I was quite satisfied, and dismissed the accuser of Bobindi. I sometimes practised a joke on him, but he always thought me in earnest; and it was very amusing to see with what gravity or grief he took it. One day he saved me from serious mischief. He and I were out blackberrying on the bank of the river. He leaped down the bank, and, on turning round, beckoned and implored me not to follow. I said, 'You have got fine blackberries; you don't wish me to share.' 'No, no, Mittiss, for God's sake do not come,' and he ran and caught up a heavy stick. I leaped, and, just by about a foot and a half, cleared a great black snake that had been sleeping in the sun. I was between it and the river, and it would have darted at me, but the little fellow struck it and stunned it with the stick, and finally we killed it. He was then about ten

years of age, and was very useful. One day, at the nearest hut on the other side of the river, he saw and admired a fine pumpkin, of forty-three pounds weight. He asked it for 'Mittiss.' They said he should have it for me, if he swam with it across the river. 'Well,' said he, 'you just lend me bag.' He got the sack; and, having cut the pumpkin in two, he put a half in either end and slung it round his neck, and swam the river, and came home in great glee. At the same hut the stockman had a hen and brood of large chickens, which he offered to Bobindi for me, if he would swim the river with them. The boy went and got a nice wattle pole, and tying the chicks' feet together, slung them and the hen on the pole, and holding them on his head with one hand, swam the river and brought them to me in triumph. I never saw a more ingenious lad. Of his many acts of contrivance these are but specimens. He was also very faithful in whatever he was set to do. His principle occupation was to look after the saddle horses, and going out on horseback with Lawrence to carry home the game. He had a pride and delight in managing a horse. I have often seen him returning with a score of wild ducks and a large kangaroo on his horse. I have also seen him bring home as many as nine swans at a time slung over the horse. I remember he was on one occasion returning; his horse was heavily

laden with ducks, swans, and other wild fowl, when he took fright. That was a laughable sight; the horse flying at top-speed; Struilby shouting to Bobindi to stick to him for his life; and the boy sticking like a monkey, while the game was thrown far and wide through the bush.

"Lawrence was as truly fond of him as if he had been a near relation. He delighted to make him whips; and, as before he was married, Lawrence had much of his own mending and sewing to do, you would be astonished how those great strong hands *could* ply a needle and thread; but they say elephants can do so. I have known him cut out and sew up a whole suit of light clothing, *in fancy style,* for Bobindi. In that suit the little fellow gloried, as a proof of master's great skill and kindness. His greatest treat in the world was to hear Lawrence tell some incident or scene of his home in Ireland. Indeed, he spoke so much of his home and all his friends, that they were all quite familiar to me. When he would finish a story, the dark kindling eyes of the boy would be riveted on him, and he would say, 'Good way more farther—another one country belonging to master.' He gloried in the thought of visiting Ireland with Lawrence, and returning to tell what he saw. While I was knitting and Lawrence reading or talking, the boy would lie down by his feet, and clasp his leg in his arms, as if he were nursing a

child. He could not have loved his father better, indeed, he would not have loved him half so well; for from *him* he never would have received so much kindness. We taught him to be cleanly in his habits. He washed with soap and water every morning, and dressed very neatly. There was nothing repulsive in him; he was full of vivacity and affection. I was teaching him to read; and he was most apt at learning. He was quite as intelligent and promising, and much more active than most white boys I have ever known. Never, while I live, can I forget the attentiveness and gratitude of dear little Bobindi."

"As I said," writes Mr. Struilby, "I was thrown off my guard by the long absence of the blacks; and so I became prodigal of my ammunition on the water-fowl. One day the stockman, Kirby, was out with Bobindi, in the onion garden by the river. Kirby ran in pale and breathless—'O master we're done for now; there is a whole tribe of blacks without their gins, and painted for war, surrounding the house.' (I well remember it was the heat of the day, and I was lying on the bed reading the Bible). 'Kirby, where is Bobindi?' 'He hid in the reeds by the river, lest they would rush on him while running into the hut.' A sharp pang shot through my heart. The first impulse was to run for the boy; but they would have speared us both had I done so. The

boy was very clever; and I thought he would lie close, and probably had not been seen. I knew they so hated him, they would risk anything to get him. Again, I thought he might crawl among the reeds down the river side, and I might not find him; and while I would be looking for him, Selina might be massacred. All this passed like lightning through my mind. I ran to the room and got my double-barrelled fowling-piece and the musket. We had just three shots, and they were in the guns. Only I know this to be sober truth, I should feel that such a statement was made for effect. But it is as true as I have life, we had just three shots. I gave the musket to Kirby; but he so trembled, I knew he could not hit a hay-rick, so I told him not to fire till they rushed on the hut. I really thought our doom was sealed; and I told him if he either needlessly lost the shot or attempted to run, I should give him one barrel, and keep the other for the blacks. Through the loop holes I could see the savages swarming in the trees, and jabbering and gesticulating to each other. It was well they did not know how short I was of ammunition. Our door was towards the river, which was a protection in front. So, Kirby and I went each to a corner of the hut next the door, from which we could see the enemy. There was one who evidently acted as their leader. He could speak some English; and, coming out, he said,

'Black fellow want white fellow gunyah (hut).' Then, I said, 'Let black fellow come and man him gunyah (take it).' That he evidently feared to do; but said, 'White fellow soon poor fellow (dead man), I believe.' I raised my gun and said, 'Black fellow soon poor fellow, *I* believe.' He scampered back. They had sheaves of heavy spears, and I feared they would throw them up, so as vertically to fall on the hut, the bark roof of which they would have pierced like paper. I therefore called to Selina to get under the bed, which she did—as I afterwards told her—most valiantly, and there remainded with all the equanimity circumstances would allow. Thus we continued for full six or seven hours: they afraid to attack, and we standing strictly on the defensive. At length they kindled sticks, and were evidently about to attack the hut with fire-spears. Had they done so an hour sooner, its bark roof and timber structure would have burnt like timber; but, as God would have it, a heavy down-pour of rain just then fell; and seeing this they slunk back into the forest. We still kept on our guard; and what I never knew to occur before on the station occurred then. The horses came at a mad gallop whinneying and neighing up to the station. I believe the blacks had sent a detachment in pursuit of them; for cattle will shudder and fly from the scent of blacks, as they would from tigers. One of the

horses came right up to the hut door. I caught him and mounted Kirby to fly for his life to the stations of Talamata and Herne for men and ammunition. If Bobindi had escaped, I thought he might have crawled off thither. The blacks fled about five o'clock p.m., and in about four hours after Kirby and two horsemen with arms stood on the other side of the river. When Kirby saw no one moving in the hut, he used the most terrible oaths that we were all murdered. I asked him over to see us and have some supper. All was then safe but poor Bobindi. Where was he? Alas! the milch cows answered that question. They came up to the river side and began snorting and pawing and bellowing—the sure sign that they have found a dead body or fresh blood. We went down and found the belt I had made for the child and part of his clothes lying in a pool of his blood. They could not get off the belt and had chopt it open with a tomahawk. When I saw this my eyes swam and grew dark. Never before did I feel such rage and revenge boil within me. I believe, I with tears prayed to the God of justice to deliver the murderers into my hand for vengeance. I realized what my father said he felt, when he saw the mangled corpse of his old friend and General, Lord Mountjoy, at New Ross. He said that, had he had the blast of the angel that slew the host of Assyria, he would have slain the murderers tha

had piked the old general. My dear J—, I believe vengeance belongeth unto God; but, it is more than mere human nature can bear, to see the blood of one you love, and not say in regard to his destroyers as David said—'In the name of the Lord will I destroy them.' I loved Bobindi as I should have loved my own son, had God given me one. And there he was murdered irretrievably. We proposed pursuit; but that was too late, and we could not leave Selina unprotected. I would fain have pursued, but was dissuaded. Next day we followed the trail five miles up into the mountains, where we found the place where they had roasted and eaten him. Oh, how my heart sickened! Well was it for the cannibals we did not get them within range. In several trees near by, we found they had slit down the bark and stuffed in pieces of his skin. We got his clothes; and I, with many tears, dug a grave and buried them together with the palms of his hands and his thigh bones. Those were the clothes I had made for the dear little fellow myself. Next year his skull was got in the bottom of a dry lagoon.

"We now felt utter disgust for Mitta Mitta. I immediately warned Black that I should leave so soon as he sent another overseer. I was tempted to regret that I had refused the generous offers of Mr. Mc.Farlane, who said if I would go to Melbourne he would open up my way, for he would get

me stock for a station of my own. But I resolved if I ever turned squatter my stock should be my own. I never had a talent for speculation, or any thing but downright work; and I was too proud to have any man point to my stock and say it was his. Besides, it would not have been honourable then to leave Black's station. I felt it would be so now. Everything seemed associated with the murdered boy.

"While we were waiting for my successor, I one day crossed the river in the canoe and caught my saddle mare in the bush. While I held her by the forelock in my hand, I saw, as I thought, two emus at a great distance, and I waited for a shot, for I now always and everywhere carried my gun; but they proved to be two black women, who at length passed close by, but did not see me. I wondered what this could mean, to see two lubras walking alone in the direction of my house; for they could soon cross the river like ducks. I waited some time, when two black men, with opossum rugs and fully armed, hove in sight. I mounted the mare and drew back into the thick shade. They were passing by, jabbering and talking in high glee; and one, who was acting over the death of Bobindi, as I believed, was evidently the leader of the attack on our hut, and probaby the murderer of the child. I rode out right in front of them, determined to capture both. I presented my gun, and they both

stood as if thunderstruck, with open mouths and glaring white eyes. With a slight motion they shook off their opossum rugs and dropt their arms and fled to the water. They were very swift and swam like otters; but I was on the other bank as soon as they. They scampered up the face of a rocky steep hill towards the mountain. I rode round by the slope and met them on the summit. They took to trees like wild cats. I went to one and with presented gun ordered him down. In the meantime the other, letting himself down by a branch on the edge of a rock, lifted a great stone and had it raised to hurl it from above on my head, when I gave him the contents of a barrel, and he dropt. The other was attempting a similar assault when my back was turned, and he got the other barrel. It was the first human life I had ever taken; and an awful feeling crept over me when I reflected I had slain two brother men. But they were murderers in fact; and, I think, were coming towards the hut to steal on us unawares. Besides, I really should not have killed them, but in self-defence. My judgment was the only tribunal of justice to which they could, in that region, be brought; and my gun the only executioner of justice. I left them unburied on the heights among the scrub. Shortly after that Jackey Narang, (a common name, 'Jackey the Little,' as opposed to Jackey Cobon,—'Jackey

the Great,') a cousin of Bobindi's, came from the Blan country, some two hundred and fifty miles, to enquire after his murdered relative. He and others thought that the great spite of the Snowy Mountains' blacks, who were part of the Murray nation, was against the alien Bobindi, and not against us; and that, in fact, the sacrifice of the child had saved us. Jackey, though a courageous, true man, trembled while he was on the grounds of the hostile tribe, and wished to get away as soon as possible. I promised him a safe conduct with myself back to Burangong. One day, when he was out with me, not far from where Bobindi's murderers fell, he saw the eagle-hawks hovering over the range, and said, in meditative soliloquy: 'Bell (not) bullock yan (go) up there; bell yarraman (not a horse) yan up there; bell emu, bell jumbuck (sheep), bell kangaroo. You piala buggerie alonga mine brother belonging to Bobindi,' &c. That is—'You tell me the truth, as Bobindi's brother, are not the corpses of his black murderers lying up there?' His sagacity divined the truth, which when he knew it, he leaped and danced as if he were frantic in the joy of revenge. Indeed, it is one of the deepest passions in the white, as well as *the deepest* in the black. He besought me to let him take the 'mara'—the hand—as a trophy. This I refused. In another fortnight we started. Farewell for ever to Mitta Mitta!"

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. STRUILBY TELLS HOW FOURTEEN MEN WERE BAILED UP BY THREE—FIRST VISIT OF BUSHRANGERS—A NIGHT OF HORROR—DARING INTIMIDATION OF BLACKS—SECOND VISIT OF BUSHRANGERS—MR. O'LEARY SHOT—BUSH DOCTOR—SERVANT WOMAN CARRIED AWAY BY BUSHRANGERS—ENFORCED SILENCE IN A BED-TICK.

From Mrs. Stuilby a near relative received the following account, which is given entire:—

My dear J—. You ask me to give you some account of the first years after our marriage. The first seven years after our marriage were the most laborious and dangerous of our lives. Lawrence had great bodily strength, and was very adventurous. My own constitution was then very strong also; and I always accompanied him in founding new stations, or out-stations. I never knew any one so unsuspecting as Lawrence; and, except I was with him, he seldom carried arms at that time, and had no idea in the world of making himself comfortable in his hut. He rather prided himself on living in the simplest way. I believe he could have sub-

sisted on the chase, or on an occasional sheep and damper and pot of tea the whole year round. Spirits we seldom ever tasted. Many a station he formed where white man had never lived before; and many a path in the new country still bears his name. We then had two encounters with bushrangers, and I had one with the blacks, of which I shall tell you.

A few months after we had been married, Struilby was a long way off to purchase some articles; and on his way home called at old Black's. There, there had been a cattle-muster; and fourteen men (Struilby among them) were sitting smoking and talking by the fire. Suddenly they looked round, and at the door saw two men armed with guns and pistols. They levelled their cocked guns, and swore that the first man that moved or spoke aloud they would scatter his brains. Lawrence was sitting near the fire on a small solid block of wood; he complained that one side was roasting, he was so near the fire. "Then," said one of the bushrangers, "just turn the other, and you'll be well baked by the time we have searched the house; but if you move you're a dead man." They sent in a third man to search the house for money. They searched a large box and got some money; but turned out some valuable checks (one for £60) as waste paper—the robber being too illiterate to read them. Lawrence was indignant

that fourteen men should be bailed up by two. He therefore said to a man beside him, "I'll knock one of them down with this block I'm sitting on, and do you rush at the other." It was to an old government man, called Billy the Groom, he said it, and his reply was, "By ——, if you move I'll tell them, and you'll get your brains in your pocket." When they took what they liked, they mounted and galloped off. When Lawrence returned home the following day, some of the men came into our hut to enquire the news; for news is a precious commodity in the bush. He was telling how three daring bushrangers were out committing robberies, and how they had bailed up fourteen men at Black's. Just as he had got so far in his narration, some person said, in a rough voice,—"How many are there here?" On looking around, there were two men with guns cocked and levelled at us. They ordered all to march out, and whoever did not, should have his brains blown out. They all went out except myself. I did not think they would shoot a woman. I went up to the foremost of them, and laying my hand on his arm *implored* him not to rob us. He ordered me *immediately* to follow my husband. I persisted in my entreaties, telling him we were not long married and were struggling hard to get a little hold of the world. He looked steadfastly in my face, and swore by God he would not rob me. He kept his

word; for, to the amazement of every person, they went off without taking a shilling's worth.

Some time after we shifted from that place with the cattle to what the natives call a "cainby"—a pool with springs of water. Before, we had been at what they call a "billibong,"—water holes without springs and liable to dry up. It was a remarkably out-of-the-way desolate place. After the cattle were thought to be sufficiently tailed, (herded and taught to gather into certain camps,) they started to the bush; and Lawrence and all the white men were away on their tracks. They slept on their tracks one night, and pursued them and brought them back next day. During the first day of their absence forty black fellows came up to the hut, painted and without their gins, which is a sure sign of war. They asked me—"Where white fellows?" I, of course, gave them no satisfaction. I was taking my tea, and they ordered me to give them bread ("tong-ong"), a commodity I was very short of at the time. Flour was then five pounds ten shillings per hundred weight; and, *so far* in the bush, it was not to be had for money. However, I shared what I had with them; but that did not satisfy them, and one of them threw it in the fire. This so annoyed me—knowing how glad I should be of it myself—that, in the heat of the moment, I twisted a leg out of a stool and rushed them out of the hut, striking the fellow

that had thrown the bread in the fire a heavy blow between the shoulders. He turned, and, uttering a savage yell, said, "You be poor fellow before euroka begone next night," — You'll be dead before the sun sets to-morrow night. When they were gone, I shall never forget the feeling of loneliness and horror that came over me. Night came on, but no Lawrence—no white man; and I was alone in the wild back woods, in a frail bark hut without a bar or lock. And, terrible to relate, I never once looked up to "the Strong for strength." Yet, unsought for and unseen, his mighty arm was uplifted to shield me from every danger. As the night advanced, I extinguished both fire and lamp, and kept myself *perfectly quiet.* About twelve o'clock I heard my kangaroo dog bark and growl, and I knew he smelt a black. Presently I heard a small voice softly call "Mittiss, mittiss, you let in black pickaninny, mine piala (I'll tell you) news." I took courage and unfastened the door, which I had secured as well as I could, by placing a stool and four pails of water against it. To my great relief the boy was alone. He had stolen away when the black fellows had gone to sleep, and *had ventured his life* to give me word that, the blacks were going to kill me in the morning, "when the sun jumped up;" for they are afraid to move, except in extreme cases, in the dark, for fear of evil spirits. But for this fear,

they can track in the dark, and no white person they desired to murder would be safe within their reach. The boy said it was "GENTLEMAN BILLY" I had struck, and it was he was to kill me. I gave the poor boy some thick milk to drink, of which blacks are fond, and we spent the night quietly crouching together. It was a night of the horror and darkness of death; and no one, but such as have been in similar circumstances, can tell how the heart will warm and cling even to a faithful kangaroo dog in such danger. Just before day broke I let out the little black boy. Daylight had a wonderful effect in cheering my spirit and scattering the horror of the night. I knew the blacks so well, that I knew you must never appear afraid of them, and so I resolved to face the danger before it came on me. I got the double-barrelled gun, (it was a little beauty Lawrence had bought for me shortly after our wedding), and, looking to the caps, I set off for the blacks' camp. They were all up and seated round their fire cross-legged, like tailors. On my approach they all held down their heads and began to jabber. I said firmly—"good morning." None took any notice, but still talked. I said, "my men, cobon mine been dream last night that black fellow was going to kill me when sun jump up. Now then, which one black fellow?" No response. I immediately levelled my gun at a tree near them and fired one barrel. They

saw where the bark flew off, and all started to their feet. I again demanded *which* black fellow wanted to kill me, and bade him come on now, for I had another barrel for him and my gun never told a lie. I levelled the barrel first at one, then at another, repeating my question. They all fell back crying, "not me Mittiss, not me Mittiss. No black fellow want to kill you—you murry good woman." So after a great many assurances, I was allowed to go back to the hut, and was not disturbed by them that day.

About dinner time our men returned, and at night Lawrence. He was standing before the fire drying himself, as it had rained some hours before his return, when a violent knock came to the door. Lawrence asked who was there? for we feared that it might be the blacks. A voice roughly answered that, they were policemen who had a warrant to search our hut. On Lawrence opening the door three men rushed in heavily armed; and levelling their guns at him told him he was a bloody big fellow, but to stand back or they would scatter his brains on the ground. One of them, Scotchy, who was the captain of the party, ordered me to hand him a light; and in doing so I looked him in the face. He immediately drew a horse-pistol out of his belt, and putting it to my face, vowed if I dared lift my eyes at any of them again, he would shoot me. They were afraid,

of course, I would identify them if they should be taken. After I had given him the light, Scotchy was going into our bed-room; Witton was standing over us with his gun levelled and cocked; and Russell was walking up and down sentry before the door. Lawrence said to me—"I hope, Selina, these men will behave as honourably to us as Scotchy did." He turned round and asked, "what was that I heard you say about Scotchy?" Lawrence then spoke of our first encounter at Morderay. Scotchy looked steadily at him—it was a picture. There was Lawrence quite cool, with Witton holding the loaded gun before him, and the other threw the light full on his face. He said, "Is *your* name STRUILBY?" He said it was. He then ordered Witton to lower his gun, and called in Russell from before the door. He said—"Boys, this is Mr. Struilby," and they sat down by the fire, while he went into our bed-room for our fire-arms, which he said, they *must take*, as they could not leave weapons to shoot themselves. I assured them, and truthfully, that it was not for them we kept fire-arms; but as a protection against the blacks; and I told them that the double-barrelled gun had been the means of saving my life *that day*. Of course they asked me what I meant; and I told them with tears—for the remembrance of the previous night did make me weep bitterly—how I had been left alone in that

wild, lonely place, and had barely escaped with my life. It was the first of it—at least the worst of it, that Lawrence himself had heard. I wish you had seen their indignation at the blacks, when they heard it all. I think they appeared more enraged than Lawrence. They vowed they would go to their camp and shoot all they could get. We entreated them not to do so. At length they said they were determined to frighten them; and they ordered me to bake them a damper, while they were gone to the camp, to carry them on their journey. Of course we were at their mercy, as they had our fire-arms in their possession, and I had to obey. I need not tell you that, damper is flour kneaded without barm and baked in the wood ashes, as you would roast potatoes. Well, they started for the camp, and we soon heard a terrible noise—the jabbering of the blacks and the howling of their dogs, and several shots. The bushrangers demanded how the blacks had dared to threaten a white gin. Of course they all denied having done so. The others told them they knew they had, and that they had come to punish them. Indeed they appeared so zealous for my safety, that the poor blacks, I suppose, thought they were officers of justice, and not robbers who had themselves threatened to shoot myself and my husband but a few minutes before. They told them that they would let them off that time with shooting some

of their dogs (dingoes,) but if they ever heard of them molesting a white gin again, they would follow them and shoot every one of them. They then went to work and shot several of their dogs, occasioning much consternation and grief in the camp. On their return they told us what they had done; and we felt very much relieved to know it was only dogs were shot. Several of the blacks ran up trees and others crawled into small bushes, and remained there all night, lest the terrible white men should come back and shoot them. They returned before damper and tea were quite ready and sat down to joke and talk. Russell was from the north of Ireland, from near Londonderry; and entered largely into the affairs of that country in conversation with Lawrence. The others smoked, and asked Russell for a song; and he sang a comic song, which I never heard before or since; the chorus of every verse was 'The price of my pig.' It described how an Irishman spent the price of his 'darlint cratur;' and we all laughed at it as heartily as if the turning of the tune might not have been the death of two of us at least. But it was a principle with my husband never to carry arms except he intended to use them; and never to resist, except he were prepared to kill or be killed. The arms were all on the wrong side for him to resist successfully then. They asked had he any tobacco; he produced a

large cake of fig tobacco, that was in a keg. They took a spade and cut it into four equal parts; they took three and left him one. This, together with a damper and a single-barrelled fowling piece, was all they took; and they left in the highest good humour. They started, and so did the blacks a few days afterwards, having kept very civil while they remained.

The first thing Struilby did, after the bushrangers left, was to send a man to warn our nearest neighbour, who lived at a place called Booga-booga-long. He had once been a convict; and was very much disliked for having been very cruel to government men that he had been set over. It is wonderful how old convicts know the character of the settlers; and there is no one they hate so much as one of themselves that has been cruel to his fellow-prisoners. This man's name was O'Leary. He was from Dublin; and had then been married to a nice young woman about seven weeks. The bushrangers did not then call on him; and he got fully armed to meet them if they came. At last he lost all fear of their coming; and used to run into the hut and playfully tell his wife 'here they are,' and they acted over in mirth a battle with the bushrangers. They spoke very hardly of Lawrence and me, because we sat and talked with the robbers; but what could we do? They blamed me for not putting poison in the damper;

but that I *could* not and *would* not do to any human creature, and especially to men who, however bad, treated us with a degree of honour and humanity. If Lawrence had known who they were before he opened the door, he would have fought them fairly; but he did not suspect, and it was best he did not. About a fortnight after they visited us, when it was thought they were clean gone, they visited O'Leary. They had a spirit of determined revenge toward him, which was still more embittered by their hearing of his threats if they should come. They came to his door after night and rapped loudly, and told who they were, and asked whether he intended to fight them or open his door. He made no reply, but crept cautiously to his stand of arms in the inner room; he cocked his piece, but was too much frightened to use it. They heard the noise of the gun a-drawing to full-cock, and they said, 'Once more we ask you to open the door.' On receiving no answer, they fired a volley. One of the balls passed through the two doors and through Mrs. O'Leary's thigh. She had on the brown cashmere dress in which she had been married; and several splinters of the door, together with pieces of the dress, lodged in the wound. I was present when the doctor probed the wound, and took out several of the pieces. After the poor woman received the shot she fell; and O'Leary cried out to them that

he would open the door, as his wife was shot. They entered; and went and lifted the poor woman, and expressed deep sorrow for what had happened. They told her it was the first blood they had shed; but that they had come to punish her husband for past cruelty to poor fellows that were prisoners, and were sorry she should be the innocent sufferer. They always had a strong pack horse with them. So they went to the store and took tea, sugar, tobacco, and flour, and loaded the horse; and what they could not carry away they strewed about, leaving the place destitute. Mrs. O'Leary was a long time before she recovered, and was lame for nearly two years. The medical man was a quack doctor. The whole of his drugs consisted of coarse salts, bitter aloes, and bread pills. He had been stopping at a house where there was a very young child—a boy. The child, by a chain, climbed up to the top of a set of drawers and swallowed half a cup full of the doctor's pills. The alarm of the mother was extreme; but our bush doctor quieted her by the assurance that they only consisted of chewed bread, dipt in fine flour. This was poor Mrs. O'Leary's physician. I often went to see her; and it was perfectly ridiculous to hear how her husband comforted her in her anguish. In the strongest Dublin accent, he assured her that her case would be stated in all the newspapers, and that even the Queen

would hear of it; and the scoundrels would be hanged, as sure as a gun. He appeared to wonder that this did not relieve her pain; which I could not but wish *he* had been bearing, instead of the uncomplaining poor woman.

On another occasion, two bushrangers visited our hut when Lawrence was from home with a Scotchman we had hired. His wife was washing at a tub when they alighted at the door, fully armed. They said to me, 'Mam, we do not wish to insult you even by a word; but this woman's husband has threatened us should we come this way. Had we got himself we should have preferred it; but we'll take his wife and he can come for her.' I implored them, with prayers and tears, for God's sake, not to take the woman away; but away they took her on a horse before one of them. When her husband and Lawrence came home and heard it, the latter grew pale with rage, and, getting his gun, offered to go to find them and rescue her. Her husband blubbered and cried, but thought it would be no use, and had his supper. The woman returned next day. Lawrence thought they might return; and he remained at home several days with his gun over his arm, resolved to shoot them or be shot. I was in dreadful anxiety, but was also prepared. I thank God they never showed their faces near us again. They were both taken and hanged; and I was very glad of it, though they were civil

enough to me. Others of their gang took away several women, and kept them for weeks in their hiding places in the bush. There was one man to whom word was brought that they were coming. He was in bed when a man, out of breath, shouted, 'The woman-lifters are at hand.' His wife was nervous, and trembled and shook. He said to her, 'Now, S——, I'll shoot you dead before they take you; be quiet or die.' He ripped up the bed-tick and put her in it, leaving her a hole through which to breathe and making all smooth, and then threw down the bed-clothes. When they came, he rose and let them in. They asked for his wife. He said she had gone to visit a neighbour. They saw the bed-clothes thrown down, and believed him. He made them a pot of tea, and they stayed and smoked and chatted at their leisure. I have some idea of what were her feelings during that time. Surely it was nothing less than the watchful providence of God that protected us at that period through so many dangers, in any of which one or both of us might have fallen. God was then to me 'a shield,' though alas! not 'a sun;' for, though I heard Lawrence read of him in the Bible, and I did believe there was a God, he seemed to me to be *in the past* or *in the distance;* and not what he really was—'a very present help in trouble.' I did not know him as the living God and my Father. Our religious privileges were then very few, but I have since learnt the meaning of the words—'*The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.*'"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CAPTURE AND END OF THE SCOTCHY AND WITTON GANG—THE DYING BUSHRANGER'S INJUNCTION TO THE PARSON—THE ONE SERMON DURING SEVEN YEARS — SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES — STRUILBY'S SABBATHS IN THE BUSH—BURN'S ADVICE.

THE reader may be curious to know the latter end of these unceremonious visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Struilby. The account of their capture shows the darkest side of bush-life, and the desperate character of the men, with whom colonists at that time were not unfrequently brought into contact. The following is Mr. Struilby's account:—

You ask me, my dear J——, if the gang of Scotchy, Witton and Co., were captured, and how? They were captured; for justice, even in the colonies, has a long arm and a sharp eye; and no delinquent finally escapes her. By self-interest she swears in every man as a special constable; and, I think, some of the most daring deeds ever done by man have been done by some settlers in capturing or killing bushrangers. *I* had no hand

in the taking of my old guests, for many reasons; of which two may suffice. They left my neighbourhood for a distant district; and I was so intent on "tailing cattle" that I could not get time for any hunt, except an occasional half-holiday to capture a haunch of kangaroo venison. I had once been put in jail on the false charge of absenting myself from my station without leave, which might almost have made a bushranger of a braver and more reckless man. Again, I never fancied bushranger-hunting excursions. They are not at all pleasant, if the game comes to bay. Did I ever tell you how I was nearly killed by a kangaroo, brought to bay by my two dogs, Settler and Fly? The old boomer, after a long hunt, chose to come to bay in a pool; where, standing six feet high, he caught the dogs in his fore-paws and soused them, till I feared they should be drowned. I went in to help with my clasp-knife. When near enough I attempted blood-letting; but the old fellow did not like my surgery, and lifting his hind leg and thrusting it forward, put his immense long nail (he has got two such on each hind foot) most unceremoniously into my waistcoat pocket, ripping down my waistcoat, trowsers, and boot. Half an inch deeper would have laid me open, as the boomerang did Miall Tommy at Baroo, and I should have had no mudgegong to dress my wound. The muscles of the hind-quarters of a

kangaroo give him a terrific power in his thrust or kick. Well I had rather face my meek-looking old antagonist in the pool than face a bushranger brought to bay; for they are often deadly shots. Is it not Byron says,—

> "But when a man gets fired at once or twice,
> The ear becomes more *Irish* and less nice."

I have not an "Irish" ear, if that imply apathy to an assassin's shot. I certainly should, nevertheless, have joined in the chase after Scotchy and Witton, had duty or self-defence called; but, as I said, they went elsewhere. They had a terrible grudge against two men, whom they visited in succession. One was a Mr. Oaks. Why they nursed revenge for him I do not know. Generally in such cases, it is having been reputed cruel to government men that brings them to seek blood. Oaks lived at Paramatta, near Sydney, but had a head-station on the Crookwell river, on our side of the Blue Mountains. At his station he had a beautiful library, which he had collected with much care, for there he and his family resided part of the year. He had just arrived to visit the station, bringing with him a confidential man as overseer. This man, being dressed in a black coat and hat, they took for Mr. Oaks, and shot him dead. They burned the station and library, and pursued the stockman for

his life into the bush. Mr. Oaks hid till they were gone.

They next visited the station of Dr. Gibson, where Mr. Fry was overseer. With this latter gentleman they had a heavy account to settle. Once, when he was going through the Badger Brush, near Sydney, a gang of two had attempted to rob the mail coach. He was on it, and was demanded to deliver up. He hesitated; but at length consented. "Well then," he said, "all I have is tied up in this opossum-rug." He was ordered to give it out. "If I must, I will," he said; and opening his rug he drew his revolver to full-cock, and shot the robber who was covering the driver, and took prisoner the other, who was receiving the booty. For this all praised him, but the enemies of life and property. Scotchy, Witton, and Russell had been joined by another desperado, called Reynolds, before they visited Dr. Gibson's. Fry lived in a strong loop-holed log-hut, before the door of which he was standing when my old visitors rode up. They inquired was he Fry, Dr. Gibson's overseer? He said he was. "Then," said little Scotchy, "we are coming to *fry* you in your own fat." The subject of the pun turned sharp into his door and secured it; and the bush-rangers commenced a regular siege. One stationed himself in the calf-hut, one in the stable, one behind the house, another somewhere else, and all

blazed away. Fry kept his hut-keeper, an old convict, loading while he fired. I believe he kept one undischarged pistol for his special benefit, if he should flinch. One of his best guns would not go off, and after the battle the end of a candle was found driven into it. Whether this was the crime or the blunder of the hut-keeper never could be ascertained. When he fired from one loop-hole, he moved to another to dodge his assailants. Once he deliberately waited for a shot at Scotchy, after many had been exchanged. He brought his gun to bear through a loop-hole; but the other was watching for him, and firing quickly, went so close as to splinter the slab, a fragment of which wounded Fry over the eye. They thought he was done for; but as Scotchy was putting out his head to fire again, Fry's shot caught him on the eye-brow, and carried away part of his skull. As he lay struggling in his blood, Witton ended his pain by a death-shot; and the bushrangers skulked away, without effecting the cookery they had so wittily threatened. The attorney-general lauded "the intrepid and memorable" (these were his words) Mr. Fry in open court; and greatly to Fry's detriment made him a commissioner of public lands. The rest of the gang, after a desperate fight, were taken by the police between the Crook-well and Abercrombie rivers. The police were joined by Mr. Oaks and a gentleman, Mc.Guiness,

who was another object of special hatred to bush-rangers. I must tell you how, for the honour of his wife; though it is a story within a story—a coarse kind of Chinese carving. A servant of his after chastisement took to the bush, and after some time returned mounted and dressed as a gentleman, carrying a beautiful fowling-piece. He was so disguised that his old mistress did not know him, when he inquired for Mr. Mc.Guiness on special business. She said he was out duck-shooting, but would soon be home. As the stranger's business was urgent, he fastened his horse near the door and waited.

When Mr. Mc.Guiness made his appearance the stranger was all alive, and caught Mrs. Mc.Guiness's eye. He levelled his gun to fire at the husband, but like lightning the wife sprang and caught his arm. An old decrepit man-servant hobbled out of the corner and caught the other, and by no exertion could he shake them off. He dragged them round his horse, however, which he kept between himself and Mr. Mc.Guiness. The latter feared to fire lest he should shoot his wife; and the loaded gun was still in the desperado's hands. Mc.Guiness quietly stooped under the horse's belly and discharged his gun right up through the bowels of the bushranger, who dropped dead. This is that William Mc.Guiness, who joined Mr. Oaks, Serjeant Freres, and two policemen in pursuit

of the gang of Witton. They employed a black tracker and traced them to a hut, where they had lodged the previous night. They had compelled the hut-keeper to make tea for them, just as they had compelled us to do; and they took watch through the night in turns. They appeared care-worn and anxious. At length all fell asleep. Witton, the coxswain of the crew, often started convulsively in his sleep, and at length sprung up from a troubled dream, crying "Here they come." How one's heart sorrows to think of men so lost, and having such a hell in their souls! For, after all, their gaiety is but the verdure that must soon wither over the thin crust of the volcano, whose fiery flood is wearing ever nearer the surface. So it was with my old dare-devil, comic songsters. Their pursuers tracked them from the hut, for about twelve miles, till they came to the angle of a rock that hid their farther view. Here the black, discovering the fresh dung of a horse, said, "Make a light (look sharp) croppy sit down along there." From the close governmental cut of their hair, convicts are all called croppies by the blacks. Blacks hate croppies, as they often meet cruel treatment at their hands. And croppies hate blacks as heartily, because they so often prove the means of their detection. Just then smoke curled up at a short distance, and they saw the three bushrangers boiling their kettle, while their horses

were hobbled out to grass. Russell shouted, "To arms, here they are." One of the policemen, in leaping the creek that lay between, broke the butt of his carbine, for which he was afterwards dismissed. The two civilians dismounted and took to the trees; the troopers kept to their horses. Serjeant Frere called to Russell to come from behind his tree, and fight him fair. He accepted the challenge, and coming out took deliberate aim at Frere's breast. At that instant the serjeant's horse threw up his head, and the ball striking his withers grazed his rider's hat. The horse staggered and fell to his haunches, and Frere dismounting commenced the duel with Russell. His first shot did not take effect. His second struck Russell in the groin, and he fell. He rose again, but fell; and, after shouting "Boys, I'm shot, but fight till you die," he drew a pistol, and putting it in his mouth scattered his brains about. The other two were then covered on all sides, and threw down their arms in rage and despair; having, it may be, some hope of life in the chapter of accidents. But every promise in that "Bible of fools" is a snare, especially to evil-doers.

Witton and Reynolds were lodged in contiguous cells in Goulbourne jail, where they concerted to commit suicide by hanging, at a given signal. Reynolds heard the signal and hanged himself; Witton was prepared to do so, but was prevented

by the turnkey. He was publicly executed; and, it is believed, died truly penitent. When Parson C——t visited and preached to him, it is reported he wept bitterly, and said, had he "heard *that* in time he should not be hanged to-morrow." He laid his dying injunction on the parson that he should come up through our district "up country" and preach the Gospel to those who were as ignorant as he was. This was not very complimentary to us, but it was benevolent and true of the dying man. The people around were living like heathen. The sermons were bush-yarns, often amusing, often obscene and profane, adding fuel to the fires of depravity. The occupations of the Sabbath were lounging, clothes-mending, rum-drinking, and a variety of sins and secularities. There was neither church nor chapel nearer us than a hundred and twenty miles. My wife through the years of her girlhood never heard a sermon, except in Sydney; and for the first *seven* years in the Lachlan district I never heard a sermon *but one*. That we owed to "the dying thief" Witton; for Parson C——t did come and preach once in our neighbourhood, and I heard him. He was a fine old man, but not much of a preacher. He was one of your spiritual soldiers that can't fire off hand, but must have a long rest; and whose gun even then, if not firing blank, is not always true to the mark. To preach reading may do for

cathedrals, but not for the bush. There are hearts in the bush, but it is only heart can reach them. His wife was a youngish lady, read and spoke beautifully, quite the better parson of the two; some coarse fellows laughed at him, but none at her. She gave a Bible and prayer-book to Selina, which she has still in her possession; and I have known men ride ten and even twenty-five miles through the bush to borrow that prayer-book to read the funeral service over the dead. I have seen some solemn sights, and many tears, by graves in the bush. I lived to engage a schoolmaster and missionary for that district. Till then the moral mass had little or none of the salt of the earth in it, and was left to its corruption unrestrained. Some, that once had salt, had then lost their savour, through being swallowed up in stock-caring and mammon-hunting. I am perfectly sure, though, that the settlers would support missionaries, if they were the right men who went among them. Proof of that I may give you in some future yarn.

You asked me about robbers, and I have ended with parsons; not that I at all think them links in the same chain. It is the mental association of contrasts. In fact, though parsons, like the Revs. Jehu Lovewool and Gehazi Grabber, are no credit to their order in the colonies, their order itself is a needful one both at home and abroad. And

such ministry as that of our old friends, you know whom I mean—Truthful and Dogood, though the latter was a "Methodist," are the one thing needful for colonial society just now. I have often thought it strange what an unequal distribution of things there is over the world; among other good things, of parsons. In the British islands, there you have two or three preachers in every village, elbowing each other for want of flock and sheep-run, while out here you will have squatter flocks without a shepherd, and "the run" of hundreds of miles never trodden by a spiritual shepherd's steps. There sects are fighting for windfall proselytes: here are thousands to be converted. At home you have the living waters so plentiful, that the flocks can hardly be got to drink; here they may travel for leagues and find but muddy pools or "wells without water." In truth it is marvellous to think how many here may say, "*No* man careth for my soul." But it is to be hoped the churches will not always neglect us baptized bush heathen, and that the waters of life will not always be pent up in their reservoirs at home, but find their level and flow to us. Oh, for Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Churchmen,—any men who would preach the Gospel and show us the way to a better life!

You ask me how I spent *my* Sundays? I never wrought on Sunday. I do not say my mind did

not break the yoke and work on Sunday at the plans of the coming week—especially before bush-journeys; but I always found it to my mental and bodily advantage to remember the Sabbath day and rest on it. I often used to slip away from circles of men, who were smoking and chaffing, and get by myself into the closet of primitive solitude and read the best book I could get. Often, often on such occasions have I been in spirit living over the Sundays, when we went to the church in the morning, then the Sunday-school, then closed the day with the prayer-meeting and family prayer. Alas! I did not value those days and means of grace as I ought, but their tender memories often opened the fountains within my heart. I got hold of an old copy of Richard Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest," and often read it of a Sunday in the bush. Next to the Bible, there was no book so showed the hollowness of the world, and the reality and joy of heaven. I often thought that worldly hopes were like those creeks that at certain seasons were overflowing, but when you most needed water and came to them they were arid sand.

I did often pray in the bush, and could not bear to be wholly the child of *this* world; but my glimpses of heaven were short, and the clouds soon closed overhead again. What a different man must Richard Baxter have been! His sky

appeared bright as this Australian summer. But even this climate in brightest moods is subject to hot winds and "brickfielders." I wonder had he any such in the world within. Certain it is, if he had had to wield the stock-whip and the axe, instead of the pen and Bible; and if, instead of mingling with the praises of saints, he had had to mingle in a circle of cursing, smoking, yarning, bush sinners, I do not know how he could have been so heavenly-minded as he was. I often find the sentiments of my solitude rudely brushed off by such contact, like dew off flowers by a rush of cattle over them; but still the flowers are better of the dew, and it is sweet while it lasts. If I am acting the Pharisee by thus "praying in the corners of the streets," it is you who are to blame. One thing I know, when I review the whole of life, I have not much to make me say, "God I thank thee that *I* am not like other men;" but much to make me exclaim, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

As to earthly aspirations in those days, one of my warmest was to make as much money as would enable me to return to Ireland and purchase the fee simple of my father's farm, that he might sit rent free, and that I might have the joy of enabling him to do so. Money for its own sake I did not love (as who but a mad miser does); but I began to see its usefulness for many valuable

ends. Often, then, did I think over the truth of those verses of Burns, in his "Epistle to a Young Friend," the two first of which I once thought cynical and worldly; the two last excellent:—

"Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco (strange) squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye;
For och mankind are unco wake,
And little to be trusted,
If *self* the wavering balance shake,
'Tis rarely right adjusted!

"To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her,
And gather gear by every wile,
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant;
But, for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

"The great *Creator* to revere,
Must sure become the *creature;*
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended!
An atheist's laugh 's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

"When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie *a random sting,*
It may be little minded;
But when on life we 're tempest driv'n,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fixed wi heav'n
Is sure a noble *anchor.*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

STRUILBY PURCHASES MOW-POKE STATION — HIS CAPITAL TO BEGIN WITH — INCIDENTS OF THE JOURNEY—FRIENDLY NATIVES—BEE-HUNT AND HONEY—FIRST DEPOSIT IN THE BANK—ASTONISHES THE NATIVES BY IMPORTATION OF CHAIRS, LOOKING-GLASS, &C.—AN EQUIVOCAL VISITOR.

"AFTER our return from the Murray," says Struilby, "I continued some time in the employment of my worthy old friend Meals. He was a true friend; for, although he leant on me very much, he wished me to do well for myself. He knew I had some money and some cattle, so one day he said to me,—'Now, Lawrence, you are a married man, and have some substance, and I know you will naturally wish to have a station of your own; there is Mow Poke, which you found and formed, I'll sell it, and all on it to you at a valuation.' I took it at a valuation of £590. This sum, and about £10 more, was all the money we could muster. I purchased the station, however, and after purchasing a dray-load of stores (tea, sugar, tobacco, flour, &c.), I had just *one pound* over,

and that I paid a man to drive the dray to the station, while I drove the cattle. When my own cattle were joined to those I purchased with the station, we commenced stock-keeping with 500 head of cattle (including 150 head of prime heifers) and 50 horses. Off we started of a bright spring day in September, 1843, about eleven years from the time I left home. Now I was about to form a home for many years on the farthest outpost of colonial civilization. Though I had as little money as when I returned from my first cruise in the bush to Hobart Town, yet I had more of what was not less valuable capital than money. As Green told me, I was a soft brick getting baked; I certainly had got burnt in the furnace of colonial experience, and was better fit to bear the weight of an establishment. I had got experience of bush-life, which would enable me to manage cattle of all sorts under any circumstances; and if needs be, I could, like a black, take a tomahawk and support myself and my gin (I beg Selina's pardon). I had a sound constitution, as good, thank God, as ever carried a man into the bush; and it was unbroken by dissipation, and grew stronger by hard work. I had, however, subsequently to learn that it required management. How long it is before a man learns to break in his own temper, and manage either his muscles, his mind or his money? I

had got another good thing, better than all; I had got a wife who had tongue enough to tell me my faults (as far as I could bear the discovery), and hands enough to help at any work. I had a Bible, too, the whole of which, so far as I knew it, I believed, and found that part as true as others—'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow; but woe unto him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.' What a fool Solomon was that he did not keep to this doctrine himself, instead of getting a wife for every day in the year, and thereby leaving him peace on neither Saturday nor Sunday, from the first of January till the last of December, till he died as a fool dieth! The black fellows make their wives work for them, and can sell them at will, and thus many wives are wealth to them; but as they see the white fellow *work* for his gin, no wonder the black thinks this *the* reason he only wishes one wife, as two would work him to death.

"On going to *my own* station I felt that my work would be for myself and my better half, and so the inspiration of hope possessed me. Selina shared my feeling, and we resolved that having got a hold of the world, we should, by God's help, keep it.

"Our run was a good one, having seven miles of

water frontage on the Mow Poke Creek, with as wide a margin as we liked. In all, it included about seventy-five square miles. I was well acquainted with it every mile, as I had explored it myself for Meals; and I had seen good substantial huts put up, as well as a split-rail fenced stock-yard for cattle, and a paddock for horses. I had the station honestly formed and I now enjoyed the benefit. Mow Poke is not the native name of it, but as a nocturnal bird abounds there, whose low plaintive cry sounds very like *more pork*, the bird is called More Pork; and the English leaving out the *r*, call it Mow Poke. This name I gave to the station and the creek on which it stands. The creek runs into the Yeo Yeo Creek, which is a river in winter, flowing for miles and miles till it is lost in the desert sands like many other greater waters of this region. In summer it is a chain of pools and water holes.

"The Yeo Yeo, sometimes called 'Old Man water-hole,' was so called by the blacks, because they said a yeo yeo—a monster whose height was gigantic, and whose feet were turned the wrong way—used to frequent it. This was probably a monster kangaroo. My station was the farthest out towards the desert. The first day we camped for dinner near Weedin mountain, that rises like a sugar-loaf out of the plain. A wild dog saw us and ran into a hollow log. We resolved to have

him out. So I kindled a fire at the entrance of the log, and cut a hole just large enough for him to squeeze out of at the other end. When he had wriggled out I let go the dogs at him, and Big-head soon stopped his wind. We slept under the dray with the tarpaulin let down as a curtain (beautiful apartment and tapestry say I) and had plenty of fresh air and golden dreams. Next evening we reached the station. The blacks were there encamped within two hundred yards of the hut. I had brought a brass plate, and put it on Jemmy Curraburma as the acknowledged king of the place and people. This is your only safe way with the blacks, for so you acknowledge and establish authority. They had that day hunted for 'suga bag,' and brought us a large calabash of beautiful honey. This was a really acceptable luxury, and with butter, cream, tea, and damper made an auspicious tea. It was almost as pleasant as the honey itself to see the natives hunt for it. I know nothing, except the making and throwing of the boomerang, in which they display more delicate skill. Just see a bee-hunt, and it will make you laugh though you were as tired as I was, after getting all the new stock into the yard on that evening of our arrival at Mow Poke.

"Here is a black fellow waiting at the water hole, at which the bee comes to get water to moisten its wax. He has a pair of twig forceps with a tuft

of hawk down, which has been touched with gum to make it stick. Moreover, he has his mouth full of water. The moment that the little house-fly-like bee alights at the water's edge, he spurts the mouthful of water on it, and it cannot rise. Then he sticks the down on it, and when it dries the bee sails slowly away, but yet flies as fast as the black can run for his life. Several blacks take part in the chase, all eagerly eyeing the bee. If one falls over a log or fallen tree, or into a hole, the others still pursue. Perhaps before they reach the bee's nest, two or three will have tumbled down most laughably. It is really exciting sport even to look on. But they track the bee to the tree where its nest is. When it alights, they watch it till it makes its way into the hole that leads to its honeyed store in the hollow branch or log. Then the black will tap the honey by cutting a hole under the nest, and it will fall into bark dishes abundantly. The bee-bread (with which the young bees are fed) is nutritious and sweet eating. The bees have no stings to defend their treasures, so that it is all fun and no risk, except an innocent tumble in the bee-hunt. The honey abounded around us, and the blacks were liberal of it. It and native manna we often used as a substitute for sugar, when that commodity grew scarce. Next day I dismissed the bullock-driver, and took upon myself the work of three men ; that of

hut-keeper, stock-keeper, and dairyman. Selina helped to the utmost of her power, and she and hope, with occasional help from the blacks, carried me through the first three months, till I sold a load of cheese and some fat bullocks in Goulbourne, and had money to employ a stock-keeper. Cattle at that time were miserably cheap. A fat bullock would not bring more than a pound or twenty-five shillings. I took sixty to Goulbourne, and by boiling them down made thirty shillings a-head. Hide, head, and tongue just paid for boiling down. I then lodged forty pounds in the bank, and never since wanted money in that public safe. I then, for the first time in my life, had the honour and glory of paying accounts by checks on 'my banker.' From that day I appeared to have acquired a new title to respect from all who knew I had *money in the bank*. Mr. Evenbeam, the grocer; Mr. Clipclose, the draper; (I kept clear of Mr. Startimmad, the spirit-dealer;) Mr. Cabbagewell, the tailor; all now treated me with marked respect, and called me *Mister* Struilby, when they knew I had been to the *bank*. I enjoyed it myself; for no man can so fully enjoy the satisfaction of a balance at the banker's, as the man who remembers when his funds did not amount to more than the price of his supper, or an ounce of tobacco. At that time I often visited Goulbourne, and as my expenses were small, and

sales of hides, tallow, beef, and cheese considerable, I began to get my head above water, was able to employ a stockman, buy Selina a bright dress—she loved bright colours in a dress, and the bright side of things in general—and at length I felt I could take a lounge at noon on the sofa and enjoy the sweets of partial rest. I had been a labourer, a stockman, a superintendent, and now I was a squatter, with no man on earth to say I owed him *a penny*. I had crept up the colonial ladder step by step, and resolved I should not tumble down, or, rather, I had made the ladder and put in the steps and knew they were not rotten, and could feel my foothold with a sense of security. I never went into anything I could not see my way out of without making any one loser by my speculation. I knew I could work hard and persevere, and I was resolved, by God's help, to make as much as would take me home in competence, fine down my father's farm, and make his old days easy. I told all my plans to Selina, and she sympathized with me. I used to talk so much of the old scenes and early friends that, she said she knew them better than I did. For the first two years all went on without much to notice, except the daily rounds of stock and dairy life. Sometimes a snake was killed in the dairy or near the house; sometimes a kangaroo hunted, or a young one brought home to pet; sometimes there was a

cattle muster and all the fun thereof, besides cutting and branding cattle, and roping and riding young horses. I was very fond of breaking in my own horse. One evening I was on a splendid young horse driving cattle into the stock yard, and suddenly the pet cockatoo flew on the horse's rump screaming behind me, when, with a sudden buck-jump, the horse pitched me off and fled, dragging me along over branches and stones, as my foot stuck in the stirrup. My head came with terrific thumps on the ground, and I lost consciousness. Happily for me my weight broke the girth. My nose was broken, and my collar bone smashed. No doctor, of course, was at hand, and but for Selina's two thimbles inserted in my nostrils, my nose would have been flatter and wider than a black's. I soon recovered, but my nose, which had ever been, as I thought, my most respectable feature, was displaced by the eighth of an inch, so that my looks became more sinister, and my sleep more audible than nature intended them to be.

"When next I had cattle for Goulbourne, I bought twelve mahogany chairs at an auction by a Jew. They were hair-bottomed and excellent, twenty-four shillings a-piece; the first ever brought into the Blan Bush. They were the surprise of Selina, and the admiration of neighbours. They were the subject of wonder, laugh-

ter, and jabbering to the blacks for weeks after. They would peep in and look at us sitting on them, and then disappear shaking with laughter, and imitate us in fantastic style to the tribe. They thought chairs a very ridiculous institution. When I brought home a large looking-glass and they saw themselves therein, half the tribe gathered and got a sight of it. The chief came forward and stood, and leaped, and turned before it, wondering first in gravity, then bursting into laughter at his other "mine own self Jemmy, Cobon stupid doing like it mine own self." He turned his nose from side to side with his fingers, and seeing the same in the glass, shouted—"Make a light moro.—Do look at my nose!"

Some of my journeys were not without a spice of adventure. One night, when returning with a dray of stores from Yass, all alone, and without arms, I camped out on a creek and hobbled my horse. I had cut down wood for a blazing fire; and as I stood with the hatchet in my hand, there were, not far away, the flash and the report of a gun, and I thought I heard the ball whizzing past me. I saw the man that fired, and taking a "circumbendibus" was in front of him in a minute, but I kept in the shade. He thought I had arms, I suppose, and did not attempt to lift his gun. I asked him what he wanted? He was on horseback. I ought to say I could have doubled behind a tree, or grappled with him in an instant. He said he

had lost his way. I believe he had followed me for miles, and either intended to shoot or frighten me, so that he might rob my dray. I kept a stiff cheek and steady voice, as if I had a loaded revolver in my hand, and he by and by rode off, to my great satisfaction. This taught me the wisdom of travelling with arms in future, and of being prepared to use them. Far better not carry arms at all than carry and not use them. The sight of arms will make the bushranger take life, while the unarmed man will only be robbed of property. The mention of this two-legged serpent reminds me of my whole Australian "*reptile room*," into which I must lead you by some yarn, but not just now. I do not think there is a reptile in the colony I do not know, but one, that is the green snake, the most instantaneously deadly of reptiles, if report be true. A cow will die in agonies in about two hours after the bite of a large *black snake*. Not long after the affair just mentioned, I was driving some cattle over the creek, when one of them ran into the garden among rank weeds. I followed; and a great black snake, on which she had trod, rose on end hissing, and darted at my breast. It caught me by the shirt; but did not pierce my skin. I had neither shoes nor stockings on at the time, and, had it caught me by the leg, I was done for; but the stiff shirt breast proved a shield. It was but the work of a moment; but that moment might have been death.

CHAPTER XIX.

LIFE-STRUGGLES WITHIN—A BARBED ARROW—"THY KINDNESS TO THY FRIEND"—A DYING MOTHER'S MESSAGE.

How often it is, that when outer life runs smoothest, the heart is passing through its sharpest struggles, and its noiseless currents are eddying, whirling, and broken in unseen cataracts, amid hidden rocks! The man, at whose hair-breadth escapes we shudder, will tell you that you feel probably more at their narration than he did at their occurrence; and that the contemptuous look of a friend caused him more real trouble than the presented pistol of a foe. The one was but the peril of the moment, and awoke passions and resources adequate to the occasion; the other pierced to keener susceptibilities, and left its barb undrawn for years.

To a nature so home-loving as Lawrence Struilby's, it was a painful trial not to hear from home; and he had not had a letter, but three, from his parents since he left Bathurst; that is for some nine years. This, it is true, was principally his own

fault. He had, in a season of dejection, resolved not to write till he could write something that would cheer his friends; but, in adhering to that unwise resolve, he did not sufficiently reflect on what doubt and anguish this would cause to his friends, especially to his mother, whose heart cherished the thought of him in its inmost life, and was sensitive beyond expression to his interests. The letters addressed to him at Bathurst never reached him, as no one there knew his whereabouts. When at length he wrote home, two years after he came to the Blan country, his letter reached home, but it was the only one they received from him *for seven years.* Others he wrote, but they failed of their destination; and the few he received complained bitterly of his silence. He thought of home, felt about home, prayed about home, talked day and night to his wife about home; and yet, strange to say, he was thus dilatory in writing home. He can tell you many causes of his delay and infrequency in writing. Ah, but young man, none of these *are* apologies for, though they may be mitigations of, your culpable neglect. You think of the old homestead and the bees humming on the honied leaves of the sycamore tree; but see your mother as she sits sewing there, and the big tears trickle down over her thin pale face; why do they pass so hot and rapid over those moveless features? It is for

you they are falling, while her heart alternately fears, prays, and blames? See your father there, on the winter night by the crackling fire, how thoughtful his face becomes in the pauses of story, song, and laugh—he is thinking of *you*. See your sister, with whom you used to romp and run over the green park and the shamrock field; she often weeps while she rocks her baby's cradle, and she begins to think you *are* dead. Shame, shame, young man, to think one sheet of paper and one hour could send a message that would swell those hearts with proud joy, and yet you do not write that letter. It is very thoughtless and wrong on your part. But you have wept more tears than they did over this neglect and we shall blame you no more; you have bitterly proved that every sin draws after it sorrow—that "whatsoever a man soweth, *that shall he also reap.*" But if this page should ever fall into the hand of a young man who neglects to write home, may it sting him into the habitual performance of a duty, which will become his delight!

About the twelfth year of Struilby's pilgrimage in the colonies, a letter came which stung him in the tenderest part of his being. It came from the hand and heart that should, he thought, give comfort. It was from his mother. Agnes Struilby was of a deep, quiet nature, seldom moved to anger, much more given to tears of sorrow than words of

rebuke. There was no being on earth she loved so much as her eldest son. She loved him next to God, whom she loved with her whole heart. But nothing is so terrible as the anger of love—"the wrath of the Lamb."

Struilby was returning from a neighbouring squatter's, when a letter reached him from home. He opened it with eager haste; it was from his mother, yes, in her own hand. A cloud rushed over his eyes as he read the first sentence or two. It was a letter of the most awful warning, not to say denunciation. It hinted crimes she could not write, and warned him by a mother's tears and a Saviour's blood to *give up his present course of sin,* and return to God. It hinted that her own sorrows would soon find an end; but that her latest breath should be spent in prayer for him, her prodigal but ever-beloved son. He read and read, and assured his eyes it was his mother's hand. Anger, grief, remorse, indignation and love, heaved his soul from its depths. At last he burst into a flood of child-like tears and sobs; and when his heart was relieved, he began to ask *what* he had done? He had struggled up-hill, had a loving, virtuous wife, was making money, not forgetting God, and hoped yet to live a Christian life in his native land and be the benefactor of his family and name. Ah! it is true he had been in prison; and could *that* have been heard and misrepresented at home?

Yes, he had been in the felon's cell; and that thought fell in sickening despondence on his heart. But how could they have heard it? None who knew him knew it, except Lock, and he would not write of that, which, if explained, would inculpate himself. He had heard that Lock had removed from the neighbourhood of Bathurst; could he have gone home? No. He had intended not to return till he had become an independent man, and eleven years could hardly have made him that. While these thoughts were passing through, or rather absorbing, Struilby's mind, he did not observe that his horse had lost his way in the bush, and *he knew not where he was*. This recalled him to sensations of outer things. He knew what it was to be lost in the bush, and how many men and horses had perished not many miles from home. .

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He did not at once tell to his wife the cause of his pale looks. While he tosses on a restless bed, and gives way to alternating feelings and thoughts, let us explain the origin of that letter, whose every sentence has transfixed his bosom with a barb more terrible than the jagged and poisoned spears, that the savages of the Snowy Mountains had brandished against him. To do this, we must call attention to the fortunes of his fellow-immigrant, Jerrold Lock. That gentleman set out with the resolve to be rich. He "made haste to be rich,"

and he succeeded in his object by a series of the ablest measures and manœuvres; which in a future chapter we may narrate. Then we may also tell how the splendid arch of his fortune, all sound *except the key-stone*, gave way; and, how his financial ruin, contrasted with the financial stability of Struilby, showed that cunning is not wisdom, and that honest toil is a better architect in the long run than scheming cleverness. All we say in the meantime is, that at the end of twelve years Jerrold Lock returned home worth twelve thousand pounds, leaving in the colony a most promising speculation to make more. He did not call to see his old and intimate friends—the Struilbys. This confirmed them in the belief he could have no good news of Lawrence. The wrinkles deepened on poor Agnes Struilby's brow. Her heart was almost breaking about her son, so she despatched his youngest brother to inquire of Lock what he knew of him. He stated in great confidence that Larry had turned out badly; that the last time he saw him he was lying in Bathurst prison; and the last account he heard of him was that he had given a man a dreadful beating in Bathurst, and then gone no one knew where. He entreated the young man, whose heart almost died within him, not to tell this to his mother; but to be assured this was the cause of his not calling to see her. When Benjamin Struilby reached home he told his mother part;

but in vain tried to conceal the worst. She tore the secret like a sword from his heart and sheathed it in her own. It was indeed a sword that pierced her own soul; and to relieve its piercings she prayed for her prodigal Lawrence, and wrote him that letter which discharged its stunning contents into his brain and breast, and under the contents of which he lies rolling his feverish head in that log-house, in which he hoped to be so happy with Selina, when it should be built and furnished, and all their own. There it is, built and furnished, and yet he is stricken through the heart by a shaft shot from his mother's hand at the other end of the world. When his feelings recovered from the shock, he wrote home explaining his position and prospects. This greatly relieved his poor mother's heart; but the next letter he received from his father, told him how his mother, from her death-bed, dictated the words—"Tell Lawrence that from the day he left home, I never neglected to pray for him, *three times a day*, while I could bow my knees. Charge my beloved Lawrence—my first-born—to meet me in heaven!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE EXPEDITION TO MOUNT BINIER—STRUILBY AND DUNCAN—THE START—THE FIRST AND SECOND CAMPS—THE SCRUB—THE SAND—THE DISAPPOINTMENT—THE RETURN—THE PRAYER OF ANGUISH—POOR DUNCAN!—THE TRACK—THE WATER HOLE—THE VOICES—THE REVIVAL—THE RETURN.

Ever since their settlement on the Yeo Yeo, the Struilbys have been increasing in comfort, in substance, and social respectability. The original three-roomed log-hut had been superseded by a commodious six-room wooden house, erected by a carpenter on contract. Its projecting roof, and verandahs on three sides, give it a look of airiness and elegance. In a temperature of from 80° to 97° in the shade, all cooking must be done in a kitchen at a distance from the house, and the dairy is kept in an apartment entirely under ground. There is a great avenue cut through the gum trees in front of the house, so that you can see a full mile in the direction of the road to Yass. This avenue surprised Struilby on returning from one of his journeys; for his wife had had it cut in his

absence, partly to surprise him, but principally to save him the toil of taking part in its execution; for no work can go on on the station but he will toil as hard at it as if he were still labouring for his bread. Not far behind the house, close by the pumpkin and melon ground, there stands a grand old gum-tree, with seats under it. There they often sit on the cool evenings, while Lawrence enjoys a soothing smoke, and his wife relieves her mind by giving him a little of it on various subjects. There he sits this golden December evening in midsummer, but his wife is not with him. Beside him sits a friend who is smoking cigars. What a difference in the physique and aspect of these two men? The frame of Struilby is vigorous, close-knit, and athletic, above the ordinary size, and only kept from corpulence by ceaseless activity;—a frame well fitted to bear the burden and heat of the Australian day. If a deep chest, brawny shoulders, and powerful build, be proofs of strength and pluck, then this man is remarkably plucky and strong. How different from the frame of the other, who is some seven years younger—of tall and slender, though of lithe and healthy make; an admirable frame for a literateur or a gentleman, but not well fitted for toil or endurance. He is of pure Saxon type—high forehead, light hair, blue eyes, and long military moustache. At intervals he speaks with great volubility and earnestness.

He is urging a scheme, on which his heart is set; while the good-natured, steady, grey eye of Struilby rests on him, not critically, but inquiringly and kindly. Who is he, and what is his scheme? His name is John Duncan, nephew of General Duncan, who had the honour of holding the office of governor-general of ——— for three weeks, in the interval caused by the absence of Governor ——. This honour the General never forgets. John Duncan is a young Scotchman, of most respectable connections and education. His brother, a gentleman squatter, resides some fifty miles from Mow Poke. In far-off Scotland lives his mother, an aged venerable lady, whose heart fondly turns to these two sons as her greatest treasure on earth. Her sons came to the colony under the auspices of their uncle, General Duncan, who lives in great comfort and respectability near Bathurst. John was educated for the bar; but shortly after arriving at Sydney, he became editor of the S—— G——; by which powerful organ he hoped to aid in directing public sentiment, and moulding the destinies of a rising empire. He launched full sail on his editorial career; but he took an unpopular tack on the sea of politics, and adverse gales so tattered the subscription-list of his paper, that the proprietors "relieved him of his command;" and he, in utter disgust with the senselessness of the public, and mercenariness of the proprietors, gave

up that method of moulding the destinies of Australia. Unfortunately for himself, he is one of that class of gifted young men, who are capable of anything rather than hard persevering work; who are dazzled with the poetry of new schemes, but incapable of the plodding prose that must carry any thing great into execution in this hard material world. Unfortunate for himself! aye, and for his friend, with whom he converses under that great eucalyptus tree. Such is the speculative restless genius of John Duncan. Though Lawrence Struilby is a plodding worker, he has a great deal of latent enthusiasm for enterprise within him; and his friend is working it up to effect his purpose. Duncan has some capital, and wants to embark it in cattle, to form a new station; but he is resolved that station shall be in a region entirely new to white men. Lawrence and he have become acquainted, and they are ardent friends. He far exceeds Lawrence in general knowledge and polished manners; but there is in our solid friend an honesty and kindliness, together with native good sense and humour, that makes him the greatest favorite of the district with Duncan. The latter has been studying the geography and geology of the Lachlan district, and is persuaded that between the Yeo Yeo creek and Murrumbidgee river there is much unexplored pasturage and water. It is true, long leagues of desert lie between Mow Poke and the

Binier mountain; but, beyond that desert, he believes there are splendid runs that *some one* must yet explore, and why not he and Lawrence Struilby? His own brother would not undertake the exploration; but he is timid. Struilby lives nearest the desert, and has great bush-experience; and now he has all but argued him into the enterprise. In fact almost against his own judgment, and wholly against his wife's, Struilby has consented to start next morning. Duncan's sanguine speculative temperament and eloquent tongue have, to his own hurt, triumphed over the weakest point of his friend—his over-facileness to the influence and persuasion of others. Let opposition arouse Lawrence Struilby, and you cannot turn the lion from his path; but appeal to his desire of pleasing others, and you may lead the lion like a lamb. Both he and his wife had before urged objections to this scheme of Duncan's; but now the latter has carried his point, and it is not with inaudible vexation she hears this at tea-hour. But Struilby's word was passed, that he and Duncan should equally share the perils and advantages of the expedition, and she knew at that stage it was vain to oppose. Duncan's stockman, Willie Gordon (who had married Selina's friend, Miss Black), was with his young master, and Struilby resolved to take Jackey Pollard, the black, to lead the pack horse with rations for them for a week.

Next morning all four were mounted by six o'clock. Struilby took three horses of his own; and all the rations were at his expense. He took his best horses. The Arab mare carried the rations, led by the black; and Struilby rode her beautiful colt, some four years old. Each horseman had a blanket or opossum rug strapped on the saddle before him; and quart pots, hobbles, &c., disposed in various ways.

Never before had such a cloud hung over Struilby's mind leaving home; but, though it was sad to part from his wife with tears on her cheeks, the fresh morning air, and Duncan's sanguine conversation, soon awoke his constitutional bouyancy of spirit. Their early ride through the bush raised clouds of screaming parrots and parakeets from the pea-covered boree trees. On the first day of their journey they arrived at the water-holes; which, from their being so much frequented by ducks, were called the Duck Holes; and, as they wished to save the strength of their horses for the desert, they there gave them two hours' spell. On the same evening, after an easy day's journey of thirty miles, they camped on the Duck Creek,—on the hunting grounds of the Blan blacks; and in fact, beside the burial place of the tribe. It was a sweet, solemn, secluded site, embosomed in a curve of the creek, that cemetery of the children of the wilderness. Many little mounds were there,

in which warriors forgot their weapons and gins their toils. The bark had been cut from the side of trees facing the graves; and deeply cut in the wood were the figures of kangaroos, eagles, serpents, &c., the heraldic figures and symbols of the departed. That solemn resting place of the natives was far, far away from the wood-embosomed churchyard, where Lawrence many years since had wept over the burial of two sisters younger than himself; but its seclusion was so deep, it recalled that scene and his mother's tears. The solemnity of the place and the associations awakened by it, together with the responsibility and perils of the present enterprise, made him look up solemnly to the bright stars above him, as he lay with his head on his saddle, and caused him to pray with more than usual earnestness to the God who sustains those stars, and without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground. Thirty miles more, next day, brought them to the Merule Creek—the last on the verge of the desert. As they were thinking where they should dig for water, before camping, a warragel started from under a great gum tree on the dry creek. He had been scraping for water by the roots of the tree. The kangaroo dog, Fly, was with them, and soon despatched the wild dog. With a shovel, improvised from the bark of the tree, they dug where the dog had scraped; and in three quarters of an hour's shovelling came on a

spring of beautiful clear water, which soon formed a clear well, at which all slaked their thirst. Here the waters of the Merule Creek were lost in the sand, as thousands of creeks terminate in Australia. Next morning, after breakfast, by early dawn, they started to penetrate the twenty miles of bricklow scrub which lay between them and the desert. In some parts it was hard work, for they were obstructed by belts of cane scrub, twenty feet high; but they effected it by eight o'clock, and even then the sun was intensely hot, and the kangaroo dog was panting with protruded tongue.

The only chance to save a dog in such circumstances, is to get him before you on the saddle, and gallop to water and throw him in over head and ears. Struilby could not do so now with poor Fly. He heard the rattles in her throat, and helplessly watched, while she ran and thrust her head into a hollow log for coolness, and in a few minutes was dead—the first victim of the expedition. On the verge of the desert stood the hill called Sugar-loaf Bulgar (native for "rock"), which they ascended for a look-out over the desert towards the Binier range. The hill may be some 1,800 or 2,000 feet high, principally composed of white, very white sandstone, rising like a loaf of white sugar or a pyramid of bleaching linen. Round its base for acres grew the wattle and mimosa. As they ascended a torrent track on its side, they surprised

a warragel scraping for water under a rock; and, as warragels are everywhere hated by squatters, he soon found his fate from Struilby's gun. When they had had a look from this hill, and clearly described Binier with its central depression or gap, Struilby, pointing to the vast tracts of glowing sand, asked Duncan solemnly, "Shall we go on?" Duncan, pointing to the distant hills and the gap in them, said, "*There must be water* there, and why should we now turn back with our finger in our mouth?" Struilby said, "If there is no water there, there is none here, and we may say farewell to daylight for ever." The black listened, looked dismal, and shook his head, and said, "Struilby him bell (not) stupid, him right, I b'lieve." Here one is tempted to say, why did not Struilby at this stage take his proper place, and lead the party back? Well may the reader ask this question, for Struilby ere long, in bitterness of soul, asked it of himself; but he was constitutionally defective in ability to say "No!" One would also ask, why did they not take water *with* them, ere entering on the fiery sand? That he could more easily answer. They must carry water at great inconvenience to themselves, and to the detriment of their horses; and they had then no means of carrying it. Besides, the Binier range, in the transparent atmosphere, appeared much nearer than it was; and to all appearance, and

from Duncan's scientific knowledge, they might expect water there.

Duncan led the way, and they followed into the sand, which grew deeper and more scorching to the horses' feet as they advanced. They here saw great flocks of those peculiarly Australian birds (*leipoa*) that lay their eggs in artificially constructed mounds of sand, and leave them to be hatched in the sun. These birds feed on ants and other insects, and can live without water longer than, perhaps, any other fowl. In fact, they never appear to come to water at all. There are several species of them, and this remark is not true of all; it is, however, of that one which the natives called "gunges," and which abounded there.

Every mile our travellers advanced the tufts of scrub and grass grew thinner and thinner, and the character of the sandy desert more marked. They had full sixty miles of this wilderness from the Sugar-loaf Bulgar to Binier. When they stopped mid-way to rest they had no shelter from the sun-blaze, except a tent formed by stretching a blanket on a prickly bush and their guns. They pressed on; for every hour was most precious. The searching, pitiless rays appeared to reverberate from the sand hotter than they fell on it, though in falling they appeared to dart direct into the traveller's brain. But their horses bore up nobly; and as the shades of evening fell, they stopped to rest

under the shadow of the mountain. There was no trace of water; and the horses, having performed a journey of nearly eighty miles, were greatly exhausted. Part of the way they sank to their fetlocks in the burning sand, and the frogs of their feet were cracked, and oil oozing out, as if their hoofs had been singed in a fire; but no horses in the world can stand more fatigue than the Australian horses. As there were no signs of water around the mountain, they resolved to explore the torrent-bed along its side towards the top.

Soon after sundown, as it grew dark, they reached the gap in the Binier range; and they tracked the gully towards the top looking for water; but the darkness increased, and they were compelled to desist till morning. Poor Duncan spent a wretched and restless night in thirst and foreboding. He tried to allay the pain of his thirst, and draw moisture to his mouth by eating quantities of sugar, which subsequently inflamed his thirst. Struilby tied his Arab mare to a sapling, and fell into a troubled doze, in which cascades and torrents were sounding in his ears, as lakes had been gleaming in the mirage of the day. The mare broke her fastenings; and, after rambling about, came to her master and awoke him by her heavy breathing and by licking his face. She said as plainly as she could, "I have searched in vain for water; rise you and search." He felt

deeply affected by this unwonted conduct of the gentle, faithful beast, and raised his companions by dawn to renew the search for that element, without which all should perish ere long. Alas! alas! the more thorough the search, the deeper the conviction that no water could lodge in that sandy, porous rock, on which if water were poured it would be drunk up as by a sponge. Despair glared in the looks of Struilby's companions. And no wonder, for the torments of thirst were increasing; the sun would soon be up to increase them; and to re-cross that desert and scrub appeared to be in their case beyond human power. When the daylight dawned they renewed the search, but in vain; and they saw beyond the Binier range a region as hopeless as that they had traversed. The Murrumbidgee, it is true, lay beyond; but it might prove as far to it as to the Lachlan they had left behind. (Here we may state that, subsequently, a better equipped expedition from the Murrumbidgee side did explore this region, but found it hopeless for pasturage.) Despair stared them in the face. The black looked wild and frightened; and, in sad soliloquy, said, "Bell cooleen, bell pater, these poor fellows, all tumble down when euroka jump up:—nothing to eat, nothing to drink, these poor fellows will all die when the sun jumps up." Duncan was shrunk in body, and collapsed in soul. The fearful truth was now too plain—he had suc-

ceeded in persuading his too facile friend to a common destruction. "Struilby," he said, "in God's name what shall we do? I am afraid it is all over. I only am to blame. What shall we do?" Struilby comprehended the horrors of their case better than did Duncan; and the excitement which was unmanning the one called up the resources of the deeper but tardier nature of the other. He was quite calm, and pitied Duncan. He said, "My dear friend, we'll make nothing by talk; further beyond the mountain is but deeper in the furnace. We can die but once, and God can still help us; let us return, there is no time to be lost!"

As a last trial, however, he got the black to search for a shrub he had before found in very dry places. The name of it he forgot; but the black understood him. It is a low shrub, thickly branched; and the branches protect the thick spongy roots, that often contain water enough to quench the thirst of a man. No such shrub could the black discover. Lawrence Struilby had gone through many dangers; and, though this appeared the most terrible, he did not despair, but felt roused through all his powers to make effort to save himself and his companions. Much—indeed under Providence everything—depended on the ability of their horses to hold out till they got within reach of water. For the first two days his

Arab mare, Sarah, had borne the pack, and her strength had been reserved; he now mounted her, and by sunrise led the party back on their own tracks through the desert they had crossed the previous day. If he ever lifted his heart to God it was then, as he remembered the words of his Bible: "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses; and led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

At some two or three miles from the foot of the mountain they were leaving, he discerned to their left an undulating sand-mound with some scrub on it. There he thought the waters of the Merule creek might find an outlet; and thither he led the way. They dismounted, but the burning sand-drifts yielded no water. He and Duncan resolved there to pray; and having pushed aside the burning sand, Struilby laid down a blanket on which they knelt, and in succession they poured out their sense of want and dependence to God, as men only can do who are made to feel such utter necessity and helplessness. Duncan's prayer was passionate, excited, and eloquent; highly characterized by remarkably clear views of the office and value of Christ as a Mediator; but he appeared to give

himself up as dead. If Gordon prayed, his prayers were not audible, though indifferent he could not be. But poor Jackey, he knew not God; and he sat on the sand beneath a shrub swinging to and fro and shaking and tossing his head with a doleful hum—the aboriginal dirge—the requiem of his race. Poor Jackey thus bids farewell to his tribe and to life, with no hope of sepulture except by the eagle-hawks and warragels. He feels that the white man has led him to inevitable and most miserable death, and he has no God to whom to utter nature's last doleful plaint against fate.

They remounted and went on, feeling that every moment was subtracting from the energy that should bring them to safety. Though speaking was difficult, yet Duncan and Struilby often spoke. Poor Duncan was full of self-upbraiding for the adventure; which his companion now endeavoured to excuse. He spoke in words of resignation concerning his own anticipated death, and repeatedly said—"Christ, none but Christ can be the refuge of the soul from sin and eternal death." Hour after hour passed away, and still the noble horses held on with an ambling pace through the sand, at about five miles an hour. Sometimes the riders felt sleep creeping over them for a moment, till awakened by the imaginary rush of cascades, or rivers, or by the real motion of the horses through the burning sand. "Hungry and thirsty their

souls fainted in them;" but still they held on, and ere sunset they came in sight of the Sugar-loaf Bulgar and the bricklow scrub. Poor Duncan was sinking apace. "Struilby," he said, "how magnificent is that sunset; I have seen many a sunset; I have loved sunsets; but I shall see the sunset no more. He shall rise but not find me on earth. I have nearly done with life. Oh, how much have I hoped and how little have I done! It is a vain show." His companion tried to encourage him, but the horses were fast breaking down. Oh, could they hold out but twenty miles more, they might bear their riders to water. But it is impossible. When they reached the scrub the horses staggered. Their strength appeared to fail at the kidneys: they twisted and reeled and their riders alighted. Jackey's horse was mad, and rushing at Struilby caught him by the breast a fearful bite. Struilby writhed with pain, but instantly shot the horse, and from his blood allayed their thirst a little. The other horses were evidently dying, all but the Arab mare's colt, who had borne the pack. All were shot except her, and she, it was afterwards thought, escaped. Had Struilby had a pail of water for himself, he would have shared it with his beloved Arab; but it was kindness to shoot her, though it cost him a fearful pang. More than once he had refused a hundred guineas for her, but it was not her price but herself

he regretted. They took to walking through the scrub; and, as it grew dark, they were fearfully torn, and often their feeble limbs gave way over a log or in a hollow, and they fell prostrate in weakness. Poor Duncan felt his strength utterly gone. He was torn by the thorns of the scrub. Struilby took off his glossy jean jacket and put it on him; but he said, "It is all in vain, I shall never take it off. My day is done. The first symptom of this death is madness. Struilby, I feel getting mad. Tell my brother to write to my mother, and tell her I perished in the desert; but by no dishonour. Tell my brother to send her my watch and jewellery. Let us pray." They knelt to prayer; and he commended his soul to God in terms the most awful and pathetic ever Struilby had heard. He prayed for his companions, and especially for Struilby, that he might reach home and be restored to his wife. He did not appear to desire or pray for safety for himself; but by the agony and bloody sweat of the Son of God, he appealed to God to forgive his sins and have mercy on his soul. Struilby lived to tell that scene; but recurrence to that prayer always made the knot to rise in his throat and the tears to fill his eyes. When he rose he asked Struilby's forgiveness for bringing him into this peril. Forgiveness was freely accorded; and, leaning on Struilby's arm, they staggered farther through the bush. Gordon

had also given up hope, and wished that on a beautiful rising ground they should all die together, where friends might find their remains. Lawrence's heart was the only one where hope still lingered. For nearly five miles he partly supported, partly carried Duncan, though his own servant never offered him an arm. Duncan complained of spikes in his boots; Struilby took them off, but nothing was there to hurt him. When put on, he again complained of sharp stones in them, and asked to be left to sleep and die. "*My* day is done," he would say; "let me sleep my long sleep." Still Struilby armed him on till he felt his own head giving way. Shortly before this, Duncan had asked Struilby to take his beautiful single-barrelled fowling-piece and keep it as a bequest; "for," said the dying man, "if any of us reaches water, it will be you, and you are a true friend; you are *so* kind." Struilby took the gun, and dropped his own heavier double-barrel. All the others had thrown away everything they carried, even to their knives. Struilby still carried the gun and quart pot; for he knew they must otherwise die of hunger if not of thirst. They thus struggled on till they came to a large currant bush, at which Duncan stood still; and, as if leaning his back against it, he sank back to rise no more. It was a fearful thing for Struilby to look by the bright star-light into the agonized face

of that dying man; his moustache clotted with the horse's blood, and his tongue protruding, while his frame wrought in the last struggles. They drew him forward, till his head so rested that the scrub would give it shade by day, if perchance they might return with water to him. Of this there was little hope; and he had, while he could, obtested them to leave him and save their own lives. They now could do nothing but leave him, except die with him. They staggered on; Struilby still firmly but almost unconsciously grasping the gun, and Jackey the tin quart pot now committed to his care. Gordon dropt all. Indeed he appeared all along to think of nothing but himself. Struilby, through the night, piloted his path by keeping on his right shoulder those two cloud-like constellations, near the southern cross, which bushmen call the "Southerland Clouds." When morning broke, and the black looked for their former tracks, strange to say, they were *precisely* retracing their former steps. At sight of this a flash of hope gleamed from his eyes, and he brightened up and cried to Struilby—"Bell stupid belonging to you; bell gammon along you; make a light mandoe belonging to yarraman." That is—"There is no stupidity with you; there is no nonsense with you; see this track belongs to the horse." Struilby's head often swam and his eyes grew misty; and he all but lost consciousness from the moment when

the tracks were seen. It was the evening of that day when they emerged from the scrub and crawled to Merule Creek. Struilby steered for the hill under which they last drank water; but he staggered past the water-hole some hundreds of yards; he was returning, however, by a detour when he met the faithful black coming with all his might, with some water in the tin quart. Though he had spilt it all to a glass-full, even that gave Struilby a little strength and he soon drank abundantly.

A hard effort brought them down to the oozing water, and they drank sandy water as fast as they could get it. And here, in Struilby's own words, in a letter to his youngest brother, he describes what there occurred. Different readers will interpret it differently; but while there may have been something of the illusions of a feverish brain at the moment, the calmest hours of after-life but confirmed Struilby that, if there be a God without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, the hand of that God was in his deliverance.

"My tongue was swelled in my head, my eyesight nearly failed. It was God that led me to the well of water. After I had drunk, I found myself so weak that only with difficulty could I raise myself from the ground. I think I never felt so hot a sun as at that time. Having even then sixty miles to where I could get any food I began to despair. My only earthly hope then

was my gun and ammunition, and tin quart pot, which I had the presence of mind to carry with me through every difficulty. We were so exhausted and weak that my surviving companions threw away everything, even to their knives. When we made the water I found all the ammunition gone but that in the gun, and one round besides. My every hope was then gone, and I was praying and resigning myself to the will of God, when I thought I felt the touch of a hand accompanied by a voice audible and distinct, which said, 'Arise, now's your time.' I looked round, but could see nothing but my companions, who were both fast asleep, and I thought it might be imagination. At that moment a carrion crow perched on the limb of a tree above my head. I tried to raise the gun to shoot it, but weakness prevented me. Again I heard the same voice as before, in sweet accents saying again, 'Now's your time; now! now! now!' Indeed, I seemed to hear a choir of voices then, some of them shrill and low; but all appeared to speak of hope. I cannot now tell what it was, but then I did not doubt it was from God. Might it not have been the spirit of my mother who then was dead,—sainted guardian of my youth, permitted to act as guardian angel of her son, then near a death of despair? God knows; but I then did not doubt and plucked up hope. I gained strength at the

moment and shot the crow. We managed to boil it in the quart pot. We ate the flesh and drank the soup, from which, by courage, and the assistance of God, we reached my place in about forty-eight hours afterwards. I was confined to my bed for three weeks after that, before I could recover strength, and it was only through God's blessing, and the tender exertions of my wife, I ever recovered. This is one of many dangers that nothing but the matchless mercy of Providence could ever have carried me through."

Struilby's presence of mind did not forsake him in the hour of reaching home. He sent the black in first to tell, or sign, that he was safe; but the naked, torn, sunken look of poor Jackey made his mistress tremble for her husband. At the door she met Gordon as naked, and torn, and wasted as the black, and then she rushed to the embrace of her husband, as miserable looking as either, and whose tongue could scarce utter the words, "Poor Duncan's dead." The brother of the latter, in a few days, reached Mow Poke cottage, but Struilby was in a raging fever. On beginning to recover, three weeks afterwards, he complained of pain and roughness in his palate, and more than an inch of the pen blade of his pocket-knife was drawn out by his wife's fingers; it having been broken off and forgotten, when, in the madness of thirst, he strove to scarify the roof of his mouth for moisture.

It is shocking to state such a fact. How much more shocking its occurrence! For years that broken knife, brought home in his belt, was kept by his wife as a memento of peril and deliverance. Duncan's brother was a timid, if not a downrightly selfish man, and did not search for the remains of the lost one till Struilby was able to take him in his spring van, with Jackey and Gordon mounted by their side. When they passed the empty lagoon at Merule, and entered on the scrub and desert, William Duncan's heart failed, and in tremour of fear he besought Struilby to return from needless search. But the latter indignant, perhaps unwisely so, at apparent cowardice and heartlessness, would not return, but tracked their former path till they came to the very bush under which the rash adventurer ended his final struggles. There it was, the very spot where they had scraped the sand off to make a cool pillow for his head, and that spot was rolled and beaten hard by that poor head ere it had for ever ceased to throb. Struilby now could weep, and gratitude and sorrow broke down the strong man into the softness of silent tears. The black and Gordon also wept; but the terror-stricken brother, pale and ghastly, hastened them away, lest his brother's fate should prove his own. Struilby, however, would not leave without search, which was rewarded by finding a few scattered bones, which the birds and beasts had

forsaken. They were interred in a shady hollow on Mow Poke Creek. A mother's tears did not water their lowly bed; but thither often did Struilby retire with his Bible on the Sabbath evenings, and renew his remembrance of the mercy which, while it took one whose work was done, left another who had much more work to do.

Full ten years of the colonial life of Struilby have yet to be described; years that included the most stirring period of his own and colonial history; years full of interesting adventure, incident, observation, and success; years in which he encountered peril and amassed gold in journeyings that brought him into contact with almost every phase of natural and human history at the antipodes. Circumstances, however, which he cannot control, compel the editor, for the time being, to desist from these memoirs. If, however, the public appreciate the present narrative of Bush Life in Australia, he may ere long publish, from materials abundant in entertainment and instruction, the second part; in which, from developed results in the lives of Lock and Struilby, may be read some important life-lessons for young men. If, however, the public do not desire them, he will present them to the relatives of LAWRENCE STRUILBY.

NIGHT-THOUGHTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.

(From Rev. J. Graham's Poems.)

The jewelled bosom of mother night
 Is bending around the earth ;
Her child she lulls to repose as soft,
 As the hour of Eden's birth.

And what is night, but the wing of Him,
 Who the heavens and earth hath made,
A wing let down to enfold the earth
 In its silent starry shade ?

I'd rather be where these glorious stars
 Are shining, so great and bright,
Than mix with the mirth of city halls,
 Where diamonds reflect the light.

Neither jar, nor glare, nor stunning din,
 In this place distract the breast ;
But the forest's primal stillness breathes
 Its deep and unbroken rest.

Unbroken,—though strange nocturnal birds
 Their notes capricious raise ;
And the shy opossum leaves its tree,
 And around my pillow plays :

Unbroken,—although the kangaroo
 Bounds past me to feed and play ;
All heedless of rifle or boomerang,
 He lives, and for me he may :

Unbroken,—although a pulse of air
The gum-leaves stirreth among,
And the flying squirrel's sudden leap,
Awakes the buggery-gong.*

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The bushman slept: and the God he sought
Made his sleep secure and sweet;
Though spear-armed savage stalked near his head,
And the snake glid near his feet.

He floated away in golden dreams,
And reached the emerald shore;
And clasped to his heart the cherished ones,
From whom he would part no more.

He saw, by the banks of Strool's sweet stream,
A tree-girt mansion rise,
Where bright-eyed little ones climb'd his knee
For the tales of other skies.

Again as a youth, he lived the scenes
Of his early golden days;
He saw the meaning of Jacob's dream,
When lo! he awoke with praise!

He awoke; and morning's golden beam
Through the trees shone clear and warm,
And squirrel, opossum, and kangaroo,
Were scanning the stranger's form.

* "Very beautiful"—native name of the Melopsittacus Striatus.

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